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Theme:

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE IN A WORLD OF RAPID CHANGE

JOHN G. ARAPURA

A. P. BARNABAS

JOHN BATHGATE

C. C. WEST

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P. D. DEVANANDAN & M. M. THOMAS

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EDITORIAL

Communication Means Participation

In his collection of essays: *Theology of Culture*[1] Paul Tillich says: "True communication of the Gospel means making possible a definite decision for or against it. We who communicate the Gospel must understand the others, we must somehow participate in (their) existence so that their rejection means partly an ejection, a throwing it out in the moment in which it starts to take root in them. To this point, we can bring them, and this is what communicating the Gospel means". And he goes on to speak about the difficulty of communicating the Christian message to the religions of Asia: "The difficulty with the highly developed religions of Asia, for instance, is not so much that they reject the Christian answer *as answer*, as that their human nature is formed in such a way that they do not ask the questions to which the Gospel gives the answer. To them the Christian answer is not an answer, because they have not asked the question to which Christianity is supposed to give the answer. This is one example of the problem of participation".

The significance of the impact of the West on Asia at the levels of technology, culture and religion is that transformation is taking place in Asian life so that for the first time Christianity can participate in the questions which the renascent cultures and religions are asking about human existence. To quote Paul Tillich again: "Something has happened in our time which has opened up many people in such a way that we can again speak to them and can participate in their situation. Today there are many people who have become aware of their human existence in such a way that they ask the question to which we can give the answer."

Ideological and social movements in Asia today are concerned with freedom, its responsibilities, anxieties and tragedies so that questions about the meaning of existence including the problems of sin, law and grace, guilt, death and salvation and the relation

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[1] Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*. Edited by Robert M. Kimball, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959.

between justice and love are raised existentially. It is only as the Church participates in the common agony of seeking answers to these questions that she can understand in depth the meaning of Jesus Christ for today and communicate the gospel of His salvation to others. Participation in human existence, knowledge of Christ and the communication of His gospel remain closely interrelated.

What does Christian participation in "the common agony of seeking answers to the questions of human existence" mean?

New Dimensions of Christian Service

At the social level, participation means a sharing in the common effort of our nations to create new social institutions and patterns of community living which do justice to the essential humanity of men, women and children. It is this sharing that today we call Christian Service. For this reason, Christian Service has acquired new dimensions of meaning and should express itself in new forms; and a great deal of thinking among the Asian Churches and among Churches and Missions concerned with Asia, is an attempt to understand them.

In October 1960, the East Asia Christian Conference organised a Consultation in Nasrapur (India) on New Forms of Christian Service and Participation. Its report has now been published.[2] The Findings of the Consultation makes clear two things: Firstly, with the emergence of the ideal of the Welfare State in the countries of Asia, any service, including Christian Service, must be conceived, primarily in terms of basic social and political action. We have passed from the era of charity to that of the "social diakonia", in which "those who formerly were the objects of charity have become partners in a common struggle for justice" (Hoekendijk). Secondly, since today Christian Service involves active co-operation with the Government and the non-Christian secular and religious agencies for the realisation of common objectives, it raises the question of the distinctive content of the adjective "Christian" in Christian Service. The Rt. Rev. Francis Ah Mya of Burma and the Rev. Murray Rogers of India raised it in an acute form at the Nasrapur Consultation. They said: "Much Christian Service

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[2] *New Forms of Christian Service and Participation*, Nasrapur, October 1960. Report of a Consultation, East Asia Christian Conference.

today is indistinguishable in purpose, hope and fear from the service rendered by all other men. It is good to share with all men in practical service of our nation, institutions or neighbours; but when we confuse God's purpose for them in Christ with their own goals and interests, our service is enslaved to the world and does not share in the redeeming grace of Christ". The call to Christians to be partners with others in a common struggle for justice is also a call to help interpret the true meaning and direction of that common struggle in the light of its final redemption and fulfilment in Christ. This is not extraneous to our service to society. It is integral to it. It may be our distinctive contribution to make society truly human.

The Coming Religious Dialogue

As the human is related to the divine, the social and cultural realms of human existence are shot through with what Tillich calls the "ultimate concern" which finds expression in both the secularist protests against, and the renaissance of, religions. There is need for Christians in India to participate at this level of the quest of modern India for the religious foundations of the new life, by entering into dialogue with the adherents of Secularism and Renascent Hinduism, on the ultimate nature and destiny of man and society. In fact, the freedom and co-existence, the Secular State provides to all religions, is not an end in itself; it has meaning only if it is used as a means of furthering such a creative dialogue among the living religions of our country. What then are the terms of such a dialogue from the Christian angle?

Hendrick Kraemer in his new book *World Cultures and World Religions – the Coming Dialogue*[3] says: "The central issue in the coming dialogue, with the grand elusive Eastern systems of humanist thinking, will, it seems, be to indicate the personal conception of the Living God as manifest in Jesus Christ, and the meaning and purpose of Man and the World in the light of God's self-disclosure in the historical Jesus Christ". No doubt, the new Asian discovery of man as person, society as a community of persons and history as a purposive movement makes the emphases on the "personal" and the "historical" relevant to modern Asian existence. Even in Asia, people today ask from religion relevance to personal

[3] Lutterworth Press, London, 1960.

and historical existence more than logical coherence. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of Jesus Christ has the saving word and may have more appeal to men involved in the tragedies of historical existence than the God of the philosophers and the scholars. This is no reason for Christians to be indifferent to metaphysics. In the context of India's strong tradition of religious philosophies in which the impersonal and the non-historical conceptions of Truth are pronounced, Christians should be prepared to grapple with the problems of philosophical Truth, and its relation to personality and history; it is there that they shall be able to show the relevance of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ to the problems of philosophy as to other problems of man.

It is significant that Kraemer himself is conscious of the importance of this philosophical participation in relation to Eastern religions. In his opinion, the confrontation of Christianity with the Eastern religions is similar to that of Christianity with Gnosticism; only the Eastern religions are "distinctly superior to Gnosticism" in that they have brought the quest of the "liberating *jnana*" (gnosis) to its logical end and have "thought through the problem of man as the agent of his salvation with unsurpassed radicality". Therefore, "Christian thinking in the coming dialogue will probably have to re-state its rela ion to the philosophy of Being, to the inebriating theologica negativa and to mysticism at its apogie in terms clearer than ever before".

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF SERVICE*

By Dr. John G. Arapura, *Serampore*

There are three different ways in which the Church can be understood, which are: (1) as the bearer of a unique revelation, (2) as a historical institution, (3) as a body that serves. In this context it is easy to see that there is a place for the theological consideration of the role and purpose of service as part of the Church's being.

The three above definitions of the Church are all tied up together. However, the differentia of the Christian Church lies in the first, that is in the fact that it carries a unique revelation. But the unique revelation has to be embodied in historical institutions and also expressed in service. Again, just as when we speak of the Church as a body that serves, we imply a plurality of services, we should rather speak of the Church as a system of institutions rather than as *an* institution. For, not only the institutions of political organization like hierarchy, order and administration, but also subtler institutions like the conventions pertaining to the written word, and canon and liturgy are integral to it.

Christ and Culture

Surely, every religion has its system of services and its system of institutions; and every religion also has its revelation. It is in the last, however that the real difference lies, for all revelations are not the same. Objectively considered, there are ways in which we can mark out the Christian revelation from all other revelations.

The uniqueness of the Christian revelation is that, amidst other things, it combines mystery with history, infinitude with finitude, the absolute with the relative. In this view infinitude and finitude become mutually communicable, being is presented as perennially present in the order of becoming, and history and mystery are treated as the clues to each other. Yet with equal validity we can place the synthesis of history and mystery either in the realm of history itself or in that of mystery itself, depending on whether we aim at the self-transcendence of history or the self-manifestation of mystery. It is the structure of human consciousness that requires that we do both. This inaugurates

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* A paper presented to the Consultation on *New Patterns of Service* in January 1960. Dr. Arapura was then on the staff of the Serampore College, Serampore. He is now on leave from Serampore, and is lecturer at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, U.S.A.

an inescapable dialectic in the Christian vision, which necessitates a continuing instantaneous transference from one standpoint to the other both in our spiritual existence and in our thought. The necessity of instantaneous transference will be overcome by instantaneous unity which will be achieved only in the state of *mukti*.

The problem of our understanding of the relation of Christ to culture comes in here. The problem cannot be solved until we clearly comprehend the dual perspective from which we see the synthesis of history and mystery and comprehend also the need for instantaneous transference within that perspective. In this age our peculiar heresy is that we insist on seeing Christ—and also His relation to culture, by implication—solely from the perspective of history, the realm of manifestation, so that the unmanifest mystery ceases to be of significance to us. We can indeed speak most legitimately of Christ as the Lord of history, as we are all too often wont to do in our history-conscious age, but we ought to speak a little more about Christ as He is seen from the perspective beyond history. Without a clear apprehension of the mystery of Christ the attempts to describe the relation of Christ to culture will yield no ultimately satisfying result.

Richard Niebuhr in his deservedly well-regarded book, *Christ and Culture*, comes to grips with this problem by reviewing the different typical ways in which other theologians have tried to solve it. The result is a challenge to recognize—and to do so decisively—an irreducible "relativism of faith".

To quote Niebuhr: "As soon, of course, as we undertake to define the essence of the Jesus Christ who is one and the same, or to say what it is that gives him his various kinds of authority, we enter into the continuous debate of the Christian community. We encounter two difficulties in particular. The first is the impossibility of stating adequately by means of concepts and propositions a principle which presents itself in the form of a person. The second is the impossibility of saying anything about this person which is not also relative to the particular standpoint in church, history and culture of the one who undertakes to describe him" (p. 14). However, he does not think that the situation is as hopeless as all that, for he adds: "If we cannot say anything adequately, we can say something inadequately. If we cannot point to the heart and essence of this Christ, we can at least point to some of the phenomena in which his essence appears. Though every description is an interpretation it can be an interpretation of the objective reality. Jesus Christ who is the Christian's authority can be described, though every description falls short of completeness and fails to satisfy others who have encountered him" (p. 14). So Niebuhr

goes on to discuss five alternative ways in which the relation of Christ to Christianity has been thought of, which are, Christ Against Culture, The Christ Of Culture, Christ Above Culture, Christ And Culture In Paradox, and Christ The Transformer of Culture. He regards all these and other possible ways of conceiving the problem as complementary to one another and comprehends them all in "the relativism of faith": "The conclusions at which we arrive individually in seeking to be Christians in our culture are relative in at least four ways. They depend on the partial, incomplete, fragmentary knowledge of the individual; they are relative to the measure of his faith and his unbelief; they are related to the historical position he occupies and to the duties of his station in society: they are concerned with the relative values of things" (p. 234).*

Now, while I admire Richard Niebuhr's expert and engaging analysis, I cannot but draw an analogy between the relativism of his position and the relativistic logic of our own Jainas as it is expressed in the famous *syādvāda*, with its seven-fold view of reality. It may be recalled that it is the Jaina logicians who invented the famous allegory of the Six Blind Men of Hindustan Who Went To See An Elephant. Now, I am tempted to oppose the Vedantic logic—though ultimately this too will need to be corrected—to what I may call Niebuhr's Jaina logic, and to propose a non-relative point of view from which we could see the problem differently.

Institution and service together form the basis, and in a sense even the body, of culture; the Church which has a supra-cultural origin and a transcendent basis, is nevertheless as much a cultural entity, with its institutions and services. The fact that the Church itself is a cultural entity complicates Christ's relation to culture. If the Church is to be regarded as the bearer of the Christian revelation, it must be assumed to possess the same characteristics of that revelation, which enables us to seek and find in it the synthesis of mystery and history. And since the Church shares with culture in general the institutional and service forms, it is legitimate to look for the extension of this synthesis in culture itself, since we cannot postulate any absolute break between culture in the Church and culture outside the Church. It is this fact that makes, for the Christian, the relativities of cultural forms and judgments real and relevant, not only to the realm of empirical existence but in a sense to the very realm of the transcendent.

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* The exposition of Richard Niebuhr's ideas here is in apposition with another paper read at the same Conference where this paper was presented. The references are to the first edition, 1951 Harper and Brothers New York.

Ultimately the question that presents itself for a solution is not where Christ stands in relation to culture, "in", "above", "against", etc., but simply what role culture plays in our knowledge of Christ. This will involve the whole emanatory series of relations, between Christ and His revelation, His revelation and the Church and the Church and culture. To simplify this, it has to do with the question how the Church bears the revelation through the forms of culture such as institutions and services and how the revelation thus carried signifies the presence of Christ in each particular context. The problem of the discernment of Christ leads us to penetrate culture in order to find the essence of the revelation; here we are in the realm of epistemology. Thus it is the revelation, which, in a strange manner, is embodied in culture and enshrined in human consciousness that reveals Christ to us. Now, this is the picture: the revelation shows forth Christ, but the revelation is to be discovered in culture itself, because it is through the forms of culture that it is mediated and perpetuated.

But the discovery is possible only through an ingressive penetration into culture with the *intention* to discover the revelation there. Surely, it is culture that mediates to us both the form of the Gospel message as well as the *intention* to discover the Gospel message. Although this perpetuity is operative in the Church, more specifically in culture-in-the-Church, the overtones of it are always to be heard in culture outside the Church also, but there it is not the same form nor the same intention and therefore not the same message. Thus while we should insist that the Gospel message is not an immanent element of culture, even in terms of culture's highest ethico-religious and socio-cultural values, we should also insist that the continuity of culture-in-the-Church with culture in general cuts at the root of any attempt to ascribe esotericism to the Gospel message, thereby declaring that it is truly communicable. Now, the Gospel message is not an inherent part of human consciousness or even human religious consciousness. It enters from outside and revolutionizes it; the channel through which it enters it is human memory as objectified and preserved in culture. The objectified memory of culture has to be mediated to the subjectivity of every man, by intention evoking intention.

Service as Witness

I take the concept of service in the broadest sense of "signs" and "miracles", pertaining necessarily to the Gospel message. Thus what we call service is really the continuation of "signs" and "miracles" of the New Testament. It serves the same purpose of witnessing to the Gospel. The Church as the bearer of the revelation needs to be accompanied by the Church as a body that serves, as it needs to be per-

petuated in the system of institutions. It is at this point that we begin to come to grips with the problem of the theology of service, of the showing of "signs" and the working of "miracles". As well for those who lived in the New Testament times when the Church as a system of institutions was beginning its career as for those who live now, "signs" and "miracles" are necessary to unlock the Gospel message. We may say that they are necessary for the ingressive penetration of culture as well for those who serve as for those who are served.

Now, the forms of service, that is the "signs" and "miracles", are themselves cultural; the difference lies only in the way in which they are employed, in what they are made to point to. We thus speak of service as a witness. Needless to say that it is an indispensable part of the Church's being. Nevertheless, I would point to the misleading and deceptive ways in which the idea of service being witness can be understood and interpreted, which are inevitable if we proceed from any assumption of essential and intrinsic connection between the patterns of the behaviour of Christians in service and the Truth to which such behaviour is intended to point. Such assumption will impel us to pretend certain things to ourselves. In our behaviour in service as Christians we may pretend either to be pointing to a Christ who is already at work in the section of society and culture that we deal with or to be importing Him afresh into a situation where He had been absent before. From my point of view, the difference between saying that Christ is already present in a situation but unrecognized and saying that He had been absent but newly brought in is neither real nor material. The difference pertains only to the psychology of operation and to the logic of discourse.

The question is, what do we witness to in our acts of service? To be sure, we witness to Christ, as the mystery above history as well as the meaning of history. But the connection between our witnessing and the object witnessed to is derived solely from our *intention*, as the forms of witness are not determined by the object of witness except insofaras that object is understood and interpreted by us. Without the declaration of intention there is no way in which we can inductively reason from the acts of service to the Truth which we *intend* to be the point of reference.

The same acts can proceed from various sources and as such can, at least theoretically, be regarded as witnessing to any number of things or even to nothing at all. The miracles that Moses performed before Pharaoh were interpreted differently and referred to different sources by his followers and his opponents. Even the "signs" that Jesus Christ showed did not carry the same meaning to His followers and His critics alike. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that there is a common spiritual

reservoir of inspiration in humanity, the depth and the breadth of which literally know no bounds, which is known to have impelled a lot of men to goodness, to sacrifical service and love. If, therefore, such service springs from the common reservoir of spiritual inspiration, it also sometimes naturally leads people to see them as pointers to the same common source. This is the reason why the noblest forms of service can be deceptive and misleading if they are regarded as *per se* witnessing to Christ. Likewise, it is difficult to establish any essential qualitative difference between the service of Christians *as Christians* and the service of others whose acts proceed from other sources of inspiration. Therefore, no service can be treated as automatic pointers to Christ.

It is here, of course, that the Church as a system of institutions ("institutions" in the best sense of the term) comes in. By means of institutional instruments, including the highest one *koinonia* or community, we define the items in our service as symbols and parables of the truth of Christ. This naturally leads us to the difficult question of acts as symbols and the objective meanings of those symbols. The connection between the symbols and their transcendent meanings as the redeeming acts of God in Christ has to be continually established by the affirmation and the vital self-consciousness of the Church as a living organism or community of faith and purpose. This is one place where the Holy Spirit comes in. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but through the Holy Spirit." Ultimately the establishment of all connection between symbols and their transcendent meanings are to be referred to the Holy Spirit.

All services of the Church are ultimately directed towards God. But under that proviso, there is a genuine difference between services directed to the world and those directed towards itself. What we call social service is as much symbolic in nature as the service of prayer and worship directed towards itself. All service is sacramental, being symbolic. The Church by its continued affirmation and the Holy Spirit by His operation establish the connection between these acts (which are really nothing but little plays) and the meaning asserted of them. Likewise, there is no intrinsic or indispensable connection between services directed towards the world and their ascribed meanings. At every time the connection has to be established by the affirmation and declaration of *intention* of the organic community of faith. Others can act the same plays that we act. But they may proclaim different meanings for them. What am I aiming at now? I want to assert that the meaning of our acts of service is symbolic; nonetheless I want to add that their concrete effect, material as well as other, is a fulfilment of the purpose of symbolism, and more than that, that is, that the effect is a good in

itself. In contrast to the Christian attitude towards service, secular programmes aim at effectiveness for itself, treating it as the end of service. But for the Christian, effect is a goal, to be sure, but not the terminus.

There is no doubt that the eye for effectiveness is important for the Christian, although there should be no attempt to turn the effect towards the doer himself but towards those for whom service is rendered. To this extent Christian service will have to be *nishkama-karma.* But to will no effect at all for any one or to be indifferent to the question of effect completely is to bring about the reductio ad absurdum of the *nishkama-karma* principle. But the ultimate effect to be willed for any recipient of Christian service is that it symbolizes to him Christ Himself.

But then, we Christians ought to be wary not to err on the other side, for there is a danger of our going so all out after effectiveness as to lose sight in the process of the limits of effectiveness. By limits I do not mean some external limits put on the way by man or society or the sin of both, which is a different problem from what we are talking about. What I have in mind is the inherent limits of any symbolic activity to be a revealer of meaning.

If we are willing to see we will perceive that this is a problem that confronts us all especially today. Some of us try to get round this vexing problem by asserting that specific types of behaviour proceed from specific motives and that these motives can be traced to specific sources of inspiration. Thus they postulate a connection between Christian behaviour in service, Christian motives and a Christian source of spiritual inspiration. But they forget that the whole structure of motives of service can either be subsumed finally under an ultimate motivelessness, with all sorts of other motives intervening so as make motivelessness yield motives of service, or can be referred to an unsystematized whole of syncretic inspirations. Nor can we assert that the Christian pattern of behaviour is what conforms to ideals and values that originated from the historic Christian source of inspiration. When we come to consider that there is a common spiritual reservoir from which all humanity can draw, we will realize that Christianity has had no monopoly in inventing these. Furthermore, no community or religion has any copyright on the very values and ideals they have invented. We have heard it said many a time that ideas like the dignity of man and the worth of the individual and perhaps even the consciousness of the social destiny of man are specific Christian discoveries or necessary deductions from the Christian understanding of man. I do grant that as it stands, genetically that is so, although, I would qualify, that they could, as least theoretically speaking, have come about

through other channels just as well. Also I want to say this: once these discoveries have come into the purview of human consciousness, they become part of the universal stock of human wisdom and of the common memory of man, and a time can come when the genetic connection can cease to be apparent or to be of real significance. Already many values and ideals that have come into existence from the Christian Faith are thriving in the world without any further dependence or even continued participation in the Christian Faith. This spectacle is especially witnessed in this highly spiritually receptive and assimilative country of ours. It is completely meaningless to say that there is any plagarism involved in this. Let us point to a concrete instance. The doctrine of love preached in the context of the Christian Gospel—forgetting for a moment the conflicting interpretations given to this doctrine by Christian theologians—has become thoroughly a part of contemporary Hindu ethical thought and has become attached to the names of certain Hindu teachers. It is difficult to retrieve this even if we fall back upon an increasing esotericism of Biblical exegesis. And why should we begrudge this state of affairs? Although I may not personally stand up with either the simple and literalistic apostles of the doctrine like Tolstoy or with its esoteric and sophisticated exponents like Nygren or Reinhold Niebuhr, I use this simply for an illustration; and I add that we should be thankful that such clear manifestation of the possibility of communication at the deeper levels exist.

Now, these things that I have observed by way of a rather long propedeutic explains, to my mind, some obvious anomalies, besides indicating the need to base our theological structures, even when they concern a subject like service, on a firm and well-criticized foundation, free from all illusions. It has been necessary to do this at length, particularly because I am concerned about arriving at a structure of thought that would not constantly need the prop and support of social auto-suggestion and collective self-persuasion.

One of the anomalies about which I mentioned is this: We Christians who often arrogate to ourselves the power to judge all things and to be custodians of God's redeeming work, are in many instances far behind others in the implementation and championing of certain moral values and in upholding justice and mercy, even when there is present none of those theological "antinomies" and "contradictions" vitiating judgment and decision. Yet we want excuses for remaining Christians and justifications for our cowardice, insensitiveness, selfishness and prejudice. The Church, to speak the truth, is often not the leader, but a reluctant and wary follower, but which as often manages to discover some principle whereby she can assert that she is still the leader. But when the Church reproaches herself for her failures the picture is

even more ridiculous, because the ghastliness of her failures will be shown against the background of her assumed higher moral vocation and, by implication, higher moral potentiality. So in the end instead of getting around to a wholesome penitence in unison with the rest of erring and ignorant humanity, she will make some covert reaffirmations of a higher but unfulfilled role. In matters moral *per se* there is no need for the Church to pretend to be the leader by virtue of any vocation whatsoever, nor is there any excuse for her to lag behind the rest of mankind in an age in which there is a genuine revolutionary urge for moral betterment of society and for the bringing about of justice and well-being in the affairs of man. The unflagging exertions to serve man in the moral and social realms need not come from any awareness of a superior moral vocation, capability or obligation on the part of the Church, for it should come from a felt anxiety to see the whole world served, even if in this the Church's own role may turn out to be not a major one. The occasions for service will then not be occasions for "living up to" the Church's higher moral call, but occasions, on the one hand, for genuinely and objectively willing mankind's good and, on the other, for proving the substance of her faith to herself in so willing and in trying to act as she wills. The quality of Christian service can be very much toned up if we stop trying to "live up to" something. The agony always is this: we feel simultaneously, "if we don't do it *nobody* else will do it" and also "somebody else *will* do it before we get round to it, and then our claim to superior vocation will be belied". Often the urge to service comes from one of these feelings. The agony springs from the fact that, although we don't recognize it, behind our highest urges to Christian service there often is the simultaneous existence of both these contradictory feelings. Considerable discrimination is necessary to see to it that the true urge to serve comes from the love of Christ and that these other urges spoken of above and similar ones do not appear to ourselves in the disguise of the love of Christ.

The relative social and political insignificance of the Christian Church in India and the powerlessness appurtenant thereto may in a sense be regarded as good insofaras these would help her to remain mindful of the true nature of her witness through service, which is to be symbolic of her faith. An interior growth in faith alone will prove to herself that her works proceed from Christ to the degree to which she would *intentionally* refer all such works to the same source. The depth of the intention is the measure of her love of Christ. And the true witness consists not in others becoming attracted by her works or its material effects, but in their taking serious and inquiring notice of the Church proving her faith to herself by works, in other words, in their interest in finding out what these mean to her and symbolize to her life and being.

Conclusion

In this discussion I have been trying to examine the requirements for an approach to a theology of service, adequate to express the basic Christian concern for witness through service and also to stand the cavil of criticism. I would clarify again that service is symbolic of the deeper meaning of redemption directed towards the world. I would add that the service that we render is not distinguished by the quantum of effects it might spread abroad, nor even by the quality of the will accompanying it but only by the depth of the intention, the intention of referring it to Christ and to His redemptive work. Needless to supplement that the quantum of effect and the quality of the will must be serious concerns of the Church engaged in serving the world and that they must be aimed at and welcomed and rejoiced in; nevertheless these are no intrinsic part of the redemption, for it is not we or our works that redeem but Christ who transforms all things, even our failures, into good account, which is not done in terms of any human calculations or apprehensions of cause and effect relation.

No one need be offended if I suggest that our most earnest activities are of the nature of a play. The play is serious as the elements we work with are human realities and real human events. It is a play because no serious consequence can occur which cannot be ultimately over-ruled and transformed by Christ's redeeming love. Our Christian service is caught in this polarity. The best that we do are only parts of a drama, a drama that we are to act out in all seriousness, where actual suffering and death and our faint human efforts to alleviate the one and overcome the other are all components. After all, is there not a sense in which we have to regard history itself as a play that continually unfolds to us, and finally brings us to the real meaning, namely Christ? If it is true that history gives us the clue to Reality—and it does—it is also true that at the highest point of history's self-unfoldment, that is, in the Christ-event, history transcends itself and there you have the mystery. In the Christ-event, of which again, the real centre is the Crucifixion-Resurrection, we have the ultimate interpreting principle of history. Yet this is not the immanent self-interpretation of history, for the principle is mystery. This is where we finally come and from where again proceed in our involvement in service.

CHRIST'S PROMISE WITHIN THE REVOLUTION*

The Meaning of Evangelism and Service in the Post-war World

By M. M. Thomas, *Trivandrum*

I. The Revolution

What are the main social and political revolutions of the post-war world, that is, of the last fifteen years?

Firstly, the most important post-war social revolution is the one which has come about as the result of the tremendous impact of the new technology on the structures of society and state, especially in the more technically developed areas of the world. Let me mention the salient aspects of this transformation.

(1) *Social.*—The second industrial revolution marked by automation, electronics, and atomic energy has increased the wealth, the material abundance and social welfare of European and North American societies to such an extent that they have already been named "the affluent society". The tremendous productivity of labour makes not only for plenty of creature-comforts of life but also for security of work and leisure for all. The young and the old, as well as the sick and the handicapped, are provided for.

The new society is marked by absolute mobility. It has abolished the idea of a structure that is given to men. There is no fixed location. Neighbourhood and neighbours constantly shift. Work and status have no fixity. The traditional idea of "my station and its duties" and what has remained of the traditional functions of structures of caste and class are in dynamic change or dissolution.

There is an increasing efficiency in the organisation of the functional aspects of life. Men as producers, consumers, workers, administrators and citizens are getting more and more organised. For this reason, on the one hand, control of society is passing into the hands of the manager, the planner and the technician; and on the other, organised groups have emerged in industry with great power in their

* This article was written on the basis of the notes of a talk given at the WSCF Teaching Conference on *The Life and Mission of the Church*, at Strasbourg, France, in July 1960 on *The Social and Political Revolution.*

hands. New types of men are being created. The *Power Elite*, the *Organisation Man*, the *White Collar*, the *Lonely Crowd* and other studies reveal the characteristic trends in structures, values and products of such a society organised and managed with technical efficiency.

(2) *Political*.—The new technical revolution is transforming the very character of national and international political life. Political philosophies and institutions which came into dominance in the late 19th century and early 20th century political life, of Europe and the United Kingdom for instance, are facing strains and even paralysis.

With the establishment of welfare state and the emergence of the affluent society, the ideologies based, especially on working class-interests conceived in 19th century terms, have ceased to give dynamic to labour parties. The economic and political power of the growing number of propertyless managers and skilled workers cut across and weaken the old division between propertied bourgeois and the dispossessed proletariat. And further, the universal recognition among practical and theoretical economists of the need of both State initiative and private enterprise for healthy economic and political development have cooled the fanaticism of the ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism. The loss of momentum of the British Labour Party for example cannot be understood except as a reflection of the changes which have come about in the political issues underlying British economics and society.

In fact, parliamentary democracy itself is under strain in the West, for example France. As the WCC Committee on Church and Society of 1959 puts it: "The new technological forces, the emergence of the welfare state, the growth of new powerful organisations in industry, the debunking of political and economic ideologies and the awakening of colonial peoples have called forth new problems of responsible political life. There is a search for viable dynamic forms of democratic order which can prevent tyranny and chaos and relate political power to justice. This is true of all parts of the world including the West, and it requires careful study."

Apart from these changes in ideological and party-structures, the national political scene in the Western countries has been profoundly affected by the fact that in the present context of the new technology, every international issue has become a domestic issue. This has never been so before. Traditionally domestic issues were determinative in elections and national politics, generally speaking. But issues of peace, armaments, cold war, decolonisation and aid to underdeveloped nations—all these have now become integral to national politics.

The revolution which the new technology has brought about in the concept of international politics, is equally radical. There is common recognition that in sober fact, with nuclear weapons, war has ceased to be a political weapon, and co-existence is the only practical policy. This has created a new situation in which powerful nations have to carry on international diplomacy with no sanction more effective than the cold war and threat of war. And with the stalemate in the race for armaments, competition in ideological propaganda for peace, colonial freedom and aid to the development of the underdeveloped countries, and other nonviolent methods to catch the imagination of the peoples of the world have begun to have a larger place in international policy than ever before.

With the emergence of affluent society in developed nations, and the ever-widening gulf in the standard of living between the developed and the underdeveloped areas of the world, the problem of the economic development of Africa, Asia and Latin America has projected into the international arena. The relation between the haves and have-nots has become the equivalent of the class-struggle of the last century. After peace, which itself is relevant to this struggle, it has become the most crucial issue of international politics. And more especially, it raises the question of charity and justice on the international level. Just as the basis of the concern for the unemployed within the nation has passed from private charity to state-doles and then to politics of full employment, justice to the under-developed nations must pass from a matter of voluntary aid to development projects to national and international state agencies of aid and to the evolution through international political struggles of a proper international economic machinery which ensures resources of development for Africa, Asia and Latin America as a matter of justice. This is a challenge to international politics in this new age.

(3) *Cultural.*—The breakdown of Christendom and its traditional integration between Church, Society and State which began in an earlier period, has now gone further than ever before to a radical secularisation, with Secularism either of the undogmatic or dogmatic variety emerging as a way of life, which can integrate technical society and welfare state within the framework of a new culture. At this point no doubt Christianity in many ways has been challenged to rethink its place in the life of the West and it has responded in different ways. But the radical secularisation of life remains a fact.

Secondly, in the post-war period, the revolt of subject peoples and races has reached a new stage. It is universally recognised that the Vasco de Gama epoch, the epoch of European expansion and rule, has come to an end. Large parts of the world under Western domination

have already attained independence, and those which still remain under colonial rule as well as their colonial powers recognise that their present relation and status must inevitably change in the short run of probably a few years. No doubt, the psychological attitudes of the battle Imperialism *versus* Nationalism are still present as hangovers and the United Nations debates reveal that there are some among Imperialists and Nationalists who consider it the life and death battle still to be joined. But on the whole, it is an out-of-date battle today. Not because freedom of subject peoples and races has ceased to be important; on the contrary, because it is universally recognised as both just and an urgent historical necessity. This recognition, coupled with the consciousness of the problems and responsibilities of nation-building which independent nations are facing, has brought about a new mood in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Nationalism still remains the basic inspiration of these continents. But at present, it is sought to give dynamism to the efforts of the nation to give political, economic and social reality to its newly acquired but formal national selfhood. And there is a constant struggle within nationalism as to how national selfhood should be defined, what national goals to strive for and what techniques to adopt to achieve them. In general the problems of nation-building in Africa, Asia and Latin America may be given under three heads: (1) There is need to develop new political structures of the nation-state, which can accomplish four functions: (*a*) preserve political stability and build up the new sense of national unity and integrity over against the fissiparous forces of religious, ethnic, tribal or other traditional communalism; (*b*) effectively plan the development of the economic life of the nation with a view to liquidate poverty and unemployment and bring about greater standards of living and welfare for the people; (*c*) promote and nourish the infant institutions of political democracy in the State, both increasingly expressing the will and interests of the majority of the people and bringing that will and those interests under the rule of law which respects the fundamental rights of persons and minorities and (*d*) work out a proper relation of economic and political interdependence with other nations both in the national interest and in the interest of peace and order in the community of nations. These four political objectives are often in tension with each other, and every nation seeks to set up its own balances and/or priorities.

(2) Nation-building involves facing the new problems of economic and social development. Plans for the increase of agricultural and industrial productivity and the equitable distribution of the products, and their relation to new social objectives raise lots of questions, into which I cannot enter here. It is widely recognised by nationalism that

the new age requires a radical transformation in the traditional pattern of social living. The building up of a new pattern of society, recognising the challenge of new social values of individual freedom and social equality and the need to develop national community over-riding the traditional communal solidarities, makes social changes imperative.

(3) Since traditional society is embedded in traditional religious cultures, the impact of Western technology and culture and the political, economic and social development along new lines involve the break-up of the traditional integration of Religion, Society and State and the evolution of a new cultural ethos. Nationalism thus has to face some very fundamental questions regarding its approach to the relation between traditional and Western cultural values and religious ideas. The problem of relating the new ethos to Traditional Religion, Reformed Religion, Secularism, and Christianity is inherent in the nation's search for new cultural foundations.

II. The Meaning of the Revolution

How do we as Christians interpret these two political and social revolutions of our time?

False Approaches.—Let me in the first place deal with three false approaches which go by the name Christian:

(1) *First*, the approach of pietism which sees Christ and His Gospel of salvation in terms of "pure spirituality" and a certain kind of "revivalism". The concern behind pietism is a legitimate one, namely to save at least a private area of spiritual freedom and personal decision in a growingly impersonal world of technical and group structures. But the world of persons is involved in the processes of nature, society and history and cannot be considered or saved in isolation. And further Jesus who is "the lover of my soul" is also the Lord of the world (the cosmos). So pietism is lopsided in its understanding of man, Christ and the nature of the salvation offered in Christ. Pietism is thus a denial of true piety and holiness, which should not mean a withdrawal from the realities of the revolutions of our time, but engagement with them in the name of the salvation offered in Christ.

(2) The *second* approach considers the revolution and the secularisation associated with it as a revolt against God and His orders and asks for a return to religion and the integration of political and social life on the basis of religious principles enunciated by religious authorities. In the West and Latin America, it takes the form of a demand for "return to Christendom", and in Asia and Africa for a reinstatement of the authority of traditional religion and religious law over society and state. Here again, the desire to overcome the break-up of human

life into fragments creating chaos with each fragment becoming a law unto itself, is a concern for wholeness of life. But the traditional religious integration was conceived in static and legalistic terms, and could not contain within it the creativeness of the human spirit; and the protest against traditional religious integration of society and state and the process of secularisation, cannot be considered simply as a revolt against God, but have to be seen also as God's judgment on a false order which suppressed human freedom and its creative dynamics. And there is no doubt that the secular revolutions of our age has enhanced man's creativeness. It is for this reason that it is impossible to equate secularisation or even Secularism as the manifestation of evil *per se*. So that the spiritual wholeness lies not in liquidating the revolution but in going beyond it to an integration not at the institutional level, but at the depths of being where freedom and creativeness seek their source, unity and goal. In any case, return to Christendom and its equivalents are often the most uncreative Christian slogans in the present revolutionary situation.

(3) The *third* approach is to give Christian benediction to the revolution, considering it as in itself a scheme of redemption. This is to affirm that history has within it the capacity to finally overcome its own inner contradictions and bring about its fulfilment; and it amounts to denying the fact of sin and the need of man for Christ's salvation. Such utopian interpretations of the revolution blind us to the forces of evil inherent in all human situations including the present one and make the conquest of the revolution by evil easier than if we were more realistic. This approach also misunderstands man and reduces Jesus Christ the Lord and Redeemer to a product of history.

So, then, we come to the question of the true Christian interpretation of the meaning of the social and political revolution of our post-war era. I like to present my tentative ideas in the form of two propositions.

The Promise of a Richer Human Life

Under the creative providence of God, the revolution of our time has within it the promise of Christ for a fuller and richer human life for men and societies. This is not going back to the utopianism of the religion of inevitable progress. While we are reluctant to use the word 'progress', we have recently been using expressions like "coming of age", "maturity" and "adulthood" of mankind. This shows that progress or growth at certain levels is discernible in the revolution. The idea of progress went wrong in thinking of heaven round the corner. There is however a progress in the conditions of humanness which makes both hell and heaven nearer than ever before and increases the

acuteness of the conflict between them. It is in this sense that one can speak of the revolution as having the promise of Christ for a richer human fulfilment. The growth in the conditions of a fuller responsible life can be discerned at various levels in the revolution of our time. Let me mention four of them.

1. The post-war revolution contains within it man's search for freedom as power and responsibility to create. It has explored man's creative powers, which find their expression in his conquest of nature, in his engineering with social forces and in his attempts at destroying old structures of life and civilisations and building new ones for the habitation of his spirit. As noted earlier, much of the atheism and secularism of our present age is a protest against the idea of a creator-God who would not give room to man's creativeness. In fact, one cannot but see the progress in science, technology and social sciences except as the expression of the enhancement of the creativeness of human freedom. Edwin Barker says: "The unfettered expansion of science and technology is demanded by God in Christ." It is a genuine promise of the fuller humanity of man.

2. The revolution is the discovery of man of his unique selfhood. Through the post-war revolutions, both individuals and groups have arrived at a heightened self-awareness expressing itself through self-determination and self-development. It indicates the discovery of man of an essential element of his humanity. The knowledge of the self of itself and other selves by persons and groups of persons do create more problems of alienation and conflict than before. Hell is other people, says one of Sarte's character. Hell is oneself where other people are reduced to projections of oneself, says a character of T. S. Eliot's play. Hell as well as heaven, alienation and reconciliation, are possible only for persons who know themselves to be responsible beings. To quote Edwin Barker again: "The evident increase in natural and personal wealth and security in the West means that men are now face to face with themselves as persons. Their main problem is their own nature and this is harder to deal with than problems of social justice." The same is true of the sense of selfhood of nations and races. But there is no question, that this enhanced sense of responsible selfhood is growth in man's humanity.

3. The revolutions of our time have within it man's search for the idea and reality of the humanness of the community of persons. Men are rejecting the traditional collectivism with its suppression of individuality and denial of equality. The very anonymity and impersonality of an urban mass society gives a sense of liberation to a traditional outcaste so that one might say that men are seeking a fuller human dignity

even when they immerse themselves in the mass-society. Of course the mass-society does not do justice to the personal, but with the pluralism and decentralisation made possible and necessary by the more recent developments of technology and organisation, the revolution has developed the conditions for community on a higher plane beyond traditional collectivism, atomic individualism and mass-society. Critics of the technical society do not often seem to recognise that injustice arises not only in ignoring love, the personal in man, but also in ignoring law which results in too much personalisation of man's impersonal functions. The traditional societies are inhuman because it is much too personalised without an adequate recognition of the structures of common life. In fact, men dislike paternalism because it is personalising areas of life which ought to be treated in terms of law. The post-war revolutions have increased the conditions for and possibility of a more proper relation between law and love, in the creation of social justice.

4. The revolution has enhanced men's sense of history as destiny. Many people have passed from the fatalism of the static vegetative patterns of living and the cyclic conception of history to the dynamic of purposive history moving towards a goal; and it is recognised as more human, since it is taking responsibility in the face of one's own destiny, even if it involves tragedy. The tragedy and despair inherent in the dynamics of historical existence, do lead many people to wish for a return to the ways of life which do not know the tragic dimension of existence. But who can doubt the promise of a fuller human life present in the sense of historical existence?

Immediately, one should go on after this to say that the revolution has inherent in it evil powers of both individual and collective egoism, self-righteousness and idolatry which are likely to betray its promise of the fuller human life. Creativeness may tempt man to elevate himself as Creator. Self-discovery leads to self-centredness expressing itself both in the self-seeking of man for power and interests resulting in exploitation and in the endless frustrating search for moral self-justification resulting in ideological fanaticism. The revolution which seeks justice and community may lead to a new ruthless tyranny or the disorder of anarchy. The sense of history and historical purpose and historical vocation may lead nations, classes and races to set themselves up as Providence itself or as the New Messiah to save mankind and bring history to fulfilment.

Jesus Christ is also at work in the revolution as victor over these evil powers through His Cross and Resurrection; and His Kingdom and His New Humanity are offered within the revolution as the fulfilment of its promises. Therefore, the promise of Christ for a richer

human life for men will be fulfilled only if the revolution receives within it Christ's Gospel of Redemption and the New Creation of which the Church is witness. In recent years we have discovered that the Church is a constitutive element of the Gospel of Christ. Indeed the good news of the world renewed in Christ is more constitutive of the Gospel than the Church which only witnesses to this renewal.

Thus for the very sake of the fuller realisation of the humanity of man, the witness of the Church to Christ's presence creating judging and redeeming the revolution is urgent within the revolution. This witness involves first, constructive participation in the revolution; second, prophetic criticism of its idolatry and resistance to it in the name of Christ and His victory over principalities and powers; and third, the exercise of the ministry of reconciliation. It is thus that the Church can help the creation of those secular conditions of true responsible human living which is the promise of God for man in and through the revolution.

In our world, the confession of Christ and the defence of man, his universal rights and the oneness of mankind have several times been seen as integral to each other. The Barmen declaration in Germany, the Church struggle in South Africa, and the sit-in-strikes in the U.S.A. —they have shown that when humanitarians and liberal humanists and even Christian Churches have found themselves unable to resist the demonic absolutism of statism and recialism, the confession of faith in Christ as the only Lord of the world and the Church and the Church's struggle to be the Church did provide the resistance.

There is, however, one question. Is confession limited to times of crises when it means spiritual resistance and suffering? Does confession begin only at the moment when the demons have conquered society, state and nation and appear as militantly anti-Christian? While there is a confession of reistance and suffering, I think it is possible and necessary to think of a confession of constructive participation and creative service. This, I believe, is the normal meaning of confession. It is a confession which involves active participation in the creation and preservation of structures of thought, social institutions and cultural ethos necessary for human living, constantly resisting the idolatries and forces of self-righteousness which appear within them which are imperceptible except to the participants. This is the kind of confession to which today the Church is called in the revolutions of our time. The permanent tension between the Church confessing its faith in Christ and the secular society, between the Church and nationalism between the Church and the State, is what can make for a healthy human society and a genuine social humanism. The Salonica Conference on

Rapid Social Change spoke about the relevance of such confession to Christ and the struggle for the being of the Church to the development of a healthy nationalism today, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It says: "The Church's struggle for the freedom of worship and witness to Christ as Lord of the nation, to keep its fellowship open to all men irrespective of colour or other communal affiliation, and to have relations with Churches outside the nation, is at the same time its contribution to the development of a healthy nationalism".

Thus the proclamation and confession of Christ and the very being of the Church as a fellowship open to all men in Christ are in themselves a diakonia, a contribution to the fulfilment of the fuller human life promised by God within the revolution. Evangelism is Service.

A Preparation for the Gospel

My second proposition is that the revolution is God's preparation of men and societies for facing the challenge of the Gospel.

It is not a preparation for the Gospel in the old sense that the acceptance of human values or their redefinition in Christian humanism, will lead inevitably to the acceptance of Christ. We know that the gods of the other religions and of the secular faiths have strengthened their militancy against Christ by absorbing these values. But in another sense, the revolution is a preparation. Through it Christ raises fundamental questions about freedom and responsibility, the human person and his destiny, the relation between law and love in community, the meaning of history in tragedy and fulfilment, questions from the depth of existence in the context of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen acquires a new relevance. No doubt, through the Church's constructive and critical participation and service in the revolution it has to clearly articulate these fundamental questions of existence in the light of Christ and also bring out the relevance of the answer in Christ. It is thus that Service becomes Evangelism.

As has already been said, this preparation of the human soil to receive Jesus Christ does not mean that He is received. That is a matter of human choice and decision. But the existential problems of the revolution makes it impossible for men to ignore Jesus Christ. And even where He is rejected, any religion, ideology or culture which rejects Jesus the Christ must have the same structure as the Christian faith or seek to transform itself to secure such structure in order to keep its appeal to be a scheme of redemption, positing a christ, a church and an eschatological fulfilment. This is the basic clue to an understanding of the significance of the anti-Christian forces of our time whether they are seen within resurgent religions, secular ideologies or totalitarian politics. That is to say the answer has to be Jesus Christ

or an Anti-Christ. The challenge to choice for or against Christ thus becomes clearer.

According to the Bible, the appearance of the Anti-Christ is a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. This is true not only at the end of history but also in the realised eschatology in history. For this reason, the militantly anti-Christian forces of our day, in so far as they are opposed to the true core of the gospel and the Church must themselves be considered a preparation for Christ. Though, for a time it will be the vocation of the Church in such context to suffer for its confession of Christ, the Anti-Christ never remains the final answer—either in history or at the end of history. And the Church's suffering itself therefore should be seen as a continuation of the Church's discernment of the Christ who asks fundamental questions to men in the revolution. Whether in constructive service or suffering (and very often even the most militantly anti-Christian situation where the accent is on suffering and spiritual resistance offers the Church room for constructive service in many ways) the Church witnesses to the Christian meaning of the revolution as preparation for the Gospel.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE*

By Dr. C. C. West, *Geneva*

"In all things approving ourselves as ministers of God...." AV
"As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...." RSV
(II Corinthians 6: 4 *a*)

Is there such a thing as *Christian* service?

If we take our examination of the modern world seriously we have good reason to raise this question. It is just the question that thoughtful Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Secularists are putting to us in this period of nation-building, not only in words, but by their own plans and deeds, and the quality of their own service. It has, of course, not always been so. There was a time when Christians had a clear field in defining and performing acts of service beyond the traditional duties of caste and family life. Christian Churches in the West and Christian missions in the East can make the proud boast that it was they who cultivated modern medicine and directed it to the public welfare through hospitals and clinics. It was they who first took up the problems of society's handicapped—the orphans, the delinquents, and the mentally deficient. They have led in service in times of large-scale disaster, and recently in refugee relief. Their schools were the first to raise the vision of whole peoples to higher possibilities for human life, and to give them the equipment for realizing those possibilities. Healing, philanthropy, education, release from poverty—all these were first presented to the world as the ministry of Christians, as the ideals of "Christian" service.

This time is now past. It is to the credit of the Churches, both in the East and the West, that at least a leading minority of Christians among them have recognized this fact. No longer can the welfare of all our fellow-men be served effectively by private agencies alone, not even by those which bear the adjective "Christian". Only the state can plan and stimulate an expanding economy. Only a government can carry through industrialization, land reform, social security, community development projects. Christian service then, means co-operating intelligently with plans for the public welfare. It means

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* A sermon peached at the closing service of the EACC Conference on *New Forms of Christian Service and Participation* held in Nasrapur in October 1960 for India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. Dr. West is on the staff of the *Ecumenical Institute*, Celigny, near Geneva.

finding ways by which they may be complemented and improved. It means developing rural co-operatives with government help, day-hostels for industrial workers, nurseries for working mothers, family problem clinics and family planning agencies, and other community development projects within the larger plan. It may mean permeating the public hospitals, medical practice, and the public educational system with the ideals and example of Christian dedication to the service of the neighbour. So the emphasis of churchly action may shift from running large institutions to training centres for Christians in secular vocations, political and social education centres in city and village, and continuing fellowships of Christians where they may consult one another on how to exercise their ministry in the jobs and responsibilities where they are in the world.

All of this and more we have said, in the reports of our Conference in Nasrapur and elsewhere. We have thoroughly defined what service to our fellow-men means in the modern world, and how we go about it. We have taken great comfort in the fact that the avenues of service for Christians have not been closed, although everywhere Church institutions are being taken over or outstripped by secular ones. We have suggested some of the new ways open to us.

1. This, indeed, we must do. "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and parisees ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." But what is there especially Christian about it? Do we not work alongside of believers in other religions who give distinctively Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim reasons for serving in the same way? Are we religious believers not all confronted with Secularists who say a bit impatiently that it matters little what gods or dogmas lie behind, so long as the nation is effectively built and human welfare efficiently served? Do we not find our own Biblical conscience reminding us, that we are unprofitable servants lacking not only in zeal to perform but in insight to define the proper service of our neighbour? Should it surprise us, that God has used men of other religions or none where we have proved inadequate? Perhaps we had better admit that the service of our neighbour is by God's will a secular enterprise, to be performed by Samaritans and Jews alike. And if we Christians believe that we understand this fact a bit more clearly than others because we know God as He has become our neighbour in Jesus Christ, do we not have to be extremely careful to avoid imagining therefore that we or our Chruches are the source of all proper planning and proper service?

2. But there is a second, more pungent reason why we should be careful of claiming too much for the "Christian" quality of our service. When we face the world as it is and not as we imagine it,

we are forced to realize that none of us—whether Christian or non-Christian—controls the outcome of the plans we make or the services we perform. There is no security in planning, in the final analysis. Indeed the attempt to secure ourselves, our nation, or our Church by planned forms of service, is the surest way to put us in conflict with other nations, other Churches or groups, who sense the hypocrisy of our motives. No Asian need look far for illustration of this point; the planned service of imperialists to the countries they dominated is still fresh in our minds. All of our service is permeated with our sinful ideas of what is good for other people. All of our planning is coloured by our interests against the interests of our neighbour, however disinterested we may imagine ourselves to be. None of it reflects God's perspective on what is good for us all. None of it is the simple service of His redeeming purpose.

We hide this fact from ourselves in various ways. Governments fulfil their plans with statistics and rosy reassurances. They proclaim the disinterested quality of their service regularly by attacking that of other nations. But we hide it also as Churches—indeed we have tended to hide it here at this Conference of the EACC at Nasrapur—in ways more subtle but just as effective. We belittle the shock which has come and will continue to come to all the old institutions we love. We close our eyes to the changes which are required in them, until the world has forced our hand, and found us unprepared. How much of our thinking here has been the attempt to make the best of the world's udgment on our past services, instead of the anticipation of God's judgment on the forms of service that are still in our power to change and renew! Or we take refuge in the hope that our participation in secular plans for social development will be welcomed by the world, and that our Christian witness there will be a new form of influence and power. One way or another we have pictured ourselves as retaining a bit of empire in this world in which our planning and our service will have the results which we desire, and we ourselves will be secure.

But the only result is continual anxiety, both in the world and in the Church—about our service and about all the institutions we associate with it. Always the haunting fear underlies our thought: suppose after all it does not go as we hope? We Christians profited greatly from an unjust imperialist order in the past. We find it possible today to live and serve as Christians in the midst of the new nations of which we are a part. We see our stake in them. But what if tomorrow this present order should be overthrown? There are classes and groups enough in our countries who feel excluded by all of our plans and strategies for serving the general welfare, both Christian and national. What if tomorrow they were to create a revolution and eliminate any

hope of reasonable planning or the free co-operation of Christians with other groups? Or what if gradually reactionary forces should gain power and stifle our freedom to live as Christians and to serve?

These are dangers which seem to threaten our existence. We therefore participate in the power-conflict in order to prevent them. We use our influence and position, what little we have, to secure the rights of Christians in government and public life. We throw our weight in favour of this group and against another for the sake of our future—our future, we would say, of effective service. We are frankly partisan in the way we serve. We are anxious about the future of the world in which we have a stake, and we call it responsibility.

Perhaps also, we are right. Proper service must be responsible. The Bible is clear about the positive attitude we are bound to take to the powers that keep order in this world. But we had better beware of claiming that this order, this plan of nation-building, or this structure of service performed by the Churches, is in a special sense "Christian". It is after all our order, our plan, our service, not Christ's. It is mixed with our interests, our securities, our culture, and our hopes, set over against those of other groups, classes and nations.

3. What then is Christian service? The Biblical text with which we started suggests that it is not any particular plan or vocation. It is not doing certain things and avoiding certain others, though this may result from it. It is simply the art of commending ourselves to all men as the servants of God. It is the expression in our whole life of what it means to say that not the order we know, not the plans we make, not the institutions we love, but Christ and He alone, is Lord of the world. The King James Bible gives this service the magnificent, but too oft misunderstood title, "ministry"—the ministry of the whole Church to the world, and that of each personal member of it. In the words that remain let me spell out a few of the ways in which this ministry leads us.

(*a*) Our Christian service is a sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ to the world. It is therefore a ministry which includes the renunciation of the power which this world offers, a self-emptying, and a cross. It is, in its essence, service out of weakness, not out of a position of strength; out of insecurity and poverty, not prestige and wealth.

Christians may find themselves in positions of power. It may indeed be irresponsible for them to surrender such positions. But the Christian knows that power over the lives and welfare of others is no power finally, if true service is the aim. At best it may be used strategically, as Paul used the power of his Roman citizenship, to bring

about a situation where the message of a crucified Lord can be more widely heard. Insofaras the Christian manages to communicate to others under his power, that he himself has inwardly renounced it, and is seeking practical ways of giving himself in service, thus far he shares the ministry of Christ's weakness.

(*b*) Christian service is rooted in the undeserved and priceless service which God has performed for us in that He has forgiven us our sins in Christ. For this reason it is a ministry of forgiveness toward others. The world is caught today in conflicts which are further embittered and driven to extremes by the feeling of each side that its rights have been violated, that crimes have been committed against it. Race is thus set against race, religion against religion, caste against caste, and more recently, linguistic community against linguistic community. Whence comes healing in this situation? The Christian is called to be one at least who makes the oppressor of himself, his group, the enemy of his class or his people, the object of his ministry.

(*c*) Christian service is a ministry of "giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed" (II Cor. 6:3). "Putting no obstacle in anyman's way" is the RSV translation. This obstacle may be in us; it may also be in him. Our service is therefore to see our neighbour, not as he sees himself, but as God sees him and as Christ is ministering to him. All that is legitimate in his ambition and striving is our concern too. We do not come into the labour union, the political party, the village panchayat, like ambassadors from outside. This sense of outsidedness, especially when tinged with a suggestion of educated superiority, is the deepest offence of all. We are one with our neighbour. His fate is our fate and his suffering our suffering. Only as we convince him of this can we serve him not as we think good or as he desires but as Christ is actually at work on his behalf. Christ is the truth in whom all truths about this world are captured and redeemed.

(*d*) Christian service, therefore, is a service of truth about this world in which we live; truth about the real needs of our neighbour, which is always deflating overstretched ideals, and puncturing the pretensions of the powerful or the excuses of the fearful. The truths which the Christian speaks, about practical secular matters of politics and economics, science or education, are not necessarily more true than those spoken by others. The Christian's judgment, like every other, is relative to what he knows about his subject. But Christian service distinguishes itself by facing the truth, with or for the neighbour, when it is difficult or dangerous to do so, when illusions would be more comforting, when self-interest, or fear of others, would dictate silence or distortion.

(*e*) Christian service is a ministry of hope, because it reflects the promise of God in Christ to reconcile the whole world unto Himself. In the present mood of national development and rapid social change, the Christian hope may seem somewhat dimmer than many which the parties of this world's politics offer. The Church seems always to be raising the warning finger to optimists and idealists: remember that you will not bring the Kingdom of God to earth. Human beings will continue to be sinners and to spoil the best social order. Always there will be power conflict and the need to keep it within bounds. But the Christian hope is all the tougher for this pessimism about the ideals and plans of the moment. The Christian does not hope because of what he reads in the daily newspapers, or the government's X-Year Plan. Nor does he lose hope when politics decays, the economy stagnates, and social chaos threatens. He is called to hope for the nation, for the whole world, more than it can hope for itself—more justice, more peace, more free community of man with man, better use of the resources of the earth for the welfare of all—while at the same time he can face and accept the most realistic and devastating analysis of world conditions. He is called to translate that hope into immediate practical service where he is.

Will this service succeed? Will Christians thrive in society and will the Church grow? The question should be referred to another: did Christ succeed? His way was that of the cross. If we are unwilling to incorporate it into the character of our serving at every point we had better cease talking of Christian ministry. Nor do we live today with the resources of God's power at our disposal. Rather it is the resurrection of this crucified Christ which is the source of our life, and the faith confirmed by continual signs that His Kingdom will prevail. In this situation we need not ask the question of success, or even of the continued growth of the Church. Our business is not to succeed or to survive, but in our living or our dying to praise this risen Lord who is coming to judge and save the world. "In all things commending ourselves as servants of God."

THE RELATION BETWEEN SERVICE AND EVANGELISM*

By Rev. John Bathgate, *Allahabad*

The Problem

A survey of the projects of rural development by Christian agencies in India indicates that none of them engages in evangelistic work. On the whole, village work of this kind is done among non-Christians with no intention of winning converts to the Christian religion or establishing Churches. This is most evident in the Allahabad project and in the American Friends Service work in Rasulia and Barpali, where the staffs include both Christians and non-Christians and few if any Christians are to be found among the villagers served. The YMCA Centre at Martandam serves a large number of Christians who are resident in its area, but it makes no attempt to evangelise non-Christians.

The projects directed by single Church or Mission agencies seem to be more intimately associated with village Christians and their Churches, but none carries on evangelistic work as part of its programme. The American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society's Rural Extension Service in Barpani, Assam, works in an area which is about 65% Christian, and the project is directly related to the Association of Churches. However, evangelism is not part of its programme. Evangelism is regarded to be the responsibility of evangelists and pastors in the area. The Rural Life Programme of the E. and R. Church's mission at Bisrampur serves Christian communities within its area but has "no evangelistic work as such" among non-Christians. This is true also of India Village Service, a co-operative venture of several Mission and Church groups.

A consideration of the development of interest in rural reconstruction among Christian agencies between Edinburgh 1910 and Madras 1938, shows that it was to a large extent an expression of Christian concern for human need, an attempt as the Edinburgh Conference said, "to continue the work Christ began". The motivation for rural reconstruction was found in the meaning of Christian service itself. So the Jerusalem Conference was able to say, "Medical missions, educational missions, agricultural missions are in themselves Christian—Christ-like—

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* An excerpt from a paper entitled *Christian Rural Service Projects as an Expression of the Church's Mission to be the Servant of the Community*. Rev. Bathgate is a Presbyterian Missionary at present engaged in a study of Christian Village Work in India and is now stationed in the Allahabad Agricultural Institute.

quite apart from any advantage they may bring to the missionary enterprise of the Church as a whole with respect to personal allegiance or institutional prestige."[1] The Laymen's Inquiry expressed a view which justified rural work on other than evangelistic grounds:

> The constructive work of the future should not be done with the primary aim of organizing Churches but rather with the aim of penetrating country communities with ways of life that will bring enriched living to all members of it, a truer spirit of co-operation, a more genuine interest in the education of children, in the productivity of the soil and in methods of raising the economic level of the neighbourhood as well as in the health and spiritual growth of the people.[2]

In spite of what seems to be a clear distinction between evangelistic and service motives for missionary work, both in the theoretical discussions at the conferences between 1910 and 1938 and in the practical programmes of rural reconstruction which resulted, one runs across criticism of service efforts for their failure to yield evangelistic results. Haroutunian, for example, writes of these efforts:

> All this was a resonable reasponse to the new situation of man. But it showed little understanding (of the Church) and its mission in our world. The good that was done by humanitarian missions was real and contributed greatly to human welfare....But as we have become aware, it was a poor way to preach the Gospel of God's care for sinners.[3]

Kraemer, who is concerned to find a theological basis for Christian service, voices a different criticism.

> In the misionary task as it is carried out by many missionary societies, alongside direct evangelism and the planting and nurturing of the Church, there has always gone on, often on a large scale, a great work of care for the sick, education, all kinds of social work and uplift, and an introduction to the 'benefits' of Western civilization.....It is striking that in defining *theologically* the place of these well-known concomitants of the missionary outreach, missionary thinking has up to the present day always been done in a pragmatic or opportunistic way. They were on the one hand conceived of as means of evangelisation, and inordinate hopes often put in their evangelistic value.....On the other hand, they were often called 'auxiliary' services, distinguished in rank and quality from the 'capital' services, that is, evangelizing and planting and nurturing the Church.[4]

Haroutunian seems to be saying that rural service efforts were poor attempts at evangelism; Kraemer suggests that they should never have been thought of as evangelism in the first place. McGavran, on the other hand, says that they have been a waste of precious effort which might better have been expended in building the Church. He writes:

> A tremendous amount of life has been poured out in rural reconstruction, literacy, public health and relief work. Yet the evidence clearly shows that these have little to do with the multiplication of churches. Where such multiplication would have taken place anyhow, there, to be sure, growth has occurred. But this drive to improve social conditions has not generally caused increase or even been conducted in places where ingathering was possible.[5]

These comments point to the need for examining the theological basis for Christian rural development efforts. It is clear, from our study of these projects, that they are not intended to be evangelistic. At the same time it is essential that work done by Christian agencies, of whatever nature, be integral to the whole life of the Church, the central purpose of which is certainly the winning of men to personal allegiance to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The Church is always tempted to lose sight of this central purpose, or at least to give it less attention than it ought to have. If the Christian efforts in rural reconstruction hinder or delay the evangelistic mission of the Church (particularly if they are thought to be a substitute for it), they cease to have a vital and integral relation to the Church. It is the purpose of this portion of this paper to attempt to state what this relationship is.

The Being of the Church

The relationship between evangelism and service must be sought in the very nature of the Church. For the *function* of the Church should be derived from its *essence*. Its activities should be determined by its very being. To reverse this order—to describe the Church only in terms of function and activity—leads to the confusion which defines the Church's purpose, for example, in terms of human need. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked become needs in themselves; service is justified wholly in the light of the good it does. The work of the Church, however, must be defined in the light of God's revealed will and purpose, and all human activity (including efforts to meet human need) must be measured and judged by what God has done and is doing, To discover the relationship of service to evangelism, we must ask: What is the nature of the Church? For what purpose does it exist?

The Church came into existence because God acted to bring it into being. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.... and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5: 19). The Church exists first of all because God has reconciled the world to Himself. Its mission is to witness to that fact and to continue the work of reconciliation which God initiated in Christ. The Church does not exist for itself, but for the world God loves and for whom His Son died.

The redemption of the world implies the restoration of the world to a former state, to conditions as they were at the very creation, when, in the Biblical view, all was "good" and harmony existed between man and God. Paul describes redemption in such terms. To him, the whole creation was affected by the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The old order is replaced by the new. The reign of sin and death has come to an end; a new life in the spirit has begun. God reigns; His victory over evil was signalled in the rising of the Crucified Christ. This means that there is no area of life, no corner of the world, no part of creation, no man, no group, no race, no nation which does not in some sense share in the redeeming activity of God....

This emphasis on the redemptive power of God at work in all creation is found in Tillich's writing.[6] For Tillich, the Biblical story of the fall of man is symbolic of the basic estrangement between man and God which has corrupted the whole of man's physical, emotional, social, economic, and even his religious life. The "new creation" of the second Corinthian letter, which Tillich calls the "New Being," is the New Testament symbol of the radical transformation of life which has come about in Jesus Christ, in whom God overcomes the estrangement between Himself and man. This transformation is taking place now, in a fragmentary way, in all of man's individual and collective life; it will be completed when God establishes His reign over all nations and cultures. Thus Tillich sees salvation as a *process*, as well as an accomplished fact. It is a process of transformation, of healing (in the sense of becoming whole), of becoming new—a process which involves the whole creation. Every act of healing, in the physical and emotional sense, every effort which makes man's personal and social life more harmonious as God intended it should be, is evidence of salvation. This means that every activity directed toward relieving physical hunger, curing disease, developing co-operative relationships in a community, dispelling fear and ignorance, strengthening mutuality and goodwill, is an expression of the saving work of God, whether or not those who perform such acts recognize them as such.

The Church has responsibility for social welfare in part because the Church has been given insight to recognize the redemptive signifi-

cance of every healing act. This insight comes from the experience and the meaning of salvation. Every man participates in the New Being, for God has redeemed the world and there is a new creation. Those who know Christ, share in the hope of His coming again, and have confidence in the ultimate triumph of His Kingdom, can see the saving power at work in every event. To proclaim this truth is the evangelistic task of the Church, for God "hath committed to us the word of reconciliation".

However, to perform healing acts is no less a part of the Church's mission. It is because the Church participates in salvation and shares in the new creation that the Church is deeply involved in healing all aspects of man's life. This is to say, then, that the Church exists to evangelize and to serve. There is no question of assigning priority to one or the other, for the Church has no choice but to preach *and* to serve. If the Church is fully the Church, it proclaims the saving word through evangelism (*kerygma*) and performs the saving act in service (*diakonia*).

We may see this same truth from a different perspective. The Church exists to continue the ministry of Christ. His ministry was a ministry which expressed His very nature. As He Himself was truly whole, in no way separated or estranged from God, and as His will was to do the will of His Father, so His ministry was healing the whole life of man. Jesus witnessed to Himself, to what He was, both in word and in act; He witnessed to the new creation of which He was the symbol, and to the new era, the Kingdom of God, which His advent established. His ministry to the sick and the hungry was not incidental, but was central to the truth which He represented and which He proclaimed. Thus, He identified who He was, in response to John the Baptist's query, by saying to John's followers: "Go and show those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:15). Service first and then evangelism is the order here, but no priority is intended, for again both are essential to the very meaning of the ministry of Jesus.

Our Lord defined His ministry in terms of service (*diakonia*) when He said, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:37). The example of Jesus performing an act of service recalls the humble gesture of washing the disciples' feet. Much more is implied in the gesture than merely a gracious example of kindly self-forgetting in concern for the needs and comfort of others. Jesus washed the disciples' feet to demonstrate, in an acted parable, that He was the Servant through whom God was revealing His profound love for the world. Barth

illumines the meaning of Jesus's Servantship when he emphasizes, in what seems to be the central theme of his later writing, the unalterable truth that "God is for us".[7] The Covenant between God and man ("I shall be your God; you shall be my people") cannot be destroyed because God will not permit this to happen. God's intention is the ultimate restoration of fellowship between Himself and His creatures. Jesus comes as one who serves, not simply to demonstrate the virtue of humility, but to witness to the very nature and will of God, who ceaselessly works for man's highest good. The ultimate basis for Christian hope, in spite of every evidence of tragedy, oppression, wickedness, exploitation, disease, enmity, hunger, is the conviction that God, who made a good creation, is intent on restoring it. This conviction enables the Church to see the saving power of God in every healing act which seeks the wholeness of man's life in every physical, emotional, economic and social aspect.

What we are saying then is that the Church is established and called to witness in word and deed to the redeeming work of God. Service to one's fellow-man is not, from a Christian point of view, primarily a response to human need. It is at least that, of course, and in performing an act of mercy the Christian shares a common humanitarianism with men of every faith, and even with those who have no religious convictions. But, for the Christian, giving a cup of cold water is much more than a humanitarian act. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick—these activities and all they symbolize of compassion and mutuality, are evidences of a new relationship among men based on the redemptive work of God. The Parable of the Last Judgment expresses a truth (whether or not it authentically comes from Jesus) which the early Church experienced when it recognized that what otherwise might have been merely an act of charity or goodwill had cosmic significance. The words, "As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to Me," carry the human act of charity to the highest plane of man's service to God. The response the Christian makes to human need is spontaneously the result of his becoming a new man in Christ. His service becomes an expression of gratitude for what God has done for him. In the parable, those who serve in this spirit are surprised to learn the consequences: "Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee..?" This suggests two things. First, true service cannot be premeditated or directed toward some ulterior purpose; it must flow spontaneously from the depths of Christian experience. Second, the consequences of service cannot be calculated in terms of human judgment or the desire to chalk down results; they become part of the eternal plan of God for the salvation of the world.

Practical Implications

It is not easy to translate a theological exposition of this kind into the practical work of Christian agencies engaged in rural reconstruction. Most persons who engage in this activity have, at times, serious misgivings about the value of their service in the face of enormous needs and vast unsolved, perhaps unsolvable, problems. The sheer fact that the increase of population in underdeveloped countries seems to undo all the good done is by itself a source of discouragement. Add to this the increasing pressure on Church and Mission agencies to conform their efforts to national programmes of rural development which tend to smother the creative contribution Christian agencies try to make, and there seems further reason to despair of the significance of Christian efforts in village development work. Yet, it is because Christian service faces such obstacles and discouragement that its motivation must be rooted deeply within the very nature of the Church itself.

The fact that Christian agencies are engaged in programmes of service to the community which in so many ways are linked to common goals shared by the nation as a whole is an opportunity for the Church to extend its service. But it is obvious that this service is acceptable to the Government and to non-Christain villagers on the whole only if it is offered with no evangelistic intention. Co-operation with non-Christians, both in Government departments and with non-Christian colleagues, eliminates evangelism directed toward winning converts to the Christian faith. In suggesting that the nature of the Church as Servant is the basic motivation for Christian service, we have said that the Church has a two-fold purpose: to witness in word and act to the saving work of God. The question arises: Can this be a true witness in deed only and not in word? Are Christian rural service projects authentically Christian if no effort is made to confront village people with the full implications of the Gospel for their lives? These questions perplex those engaged in this kind of work, partly because there is lack of clarity about the relation of service to evangelism.

I am inclined to the view that while evangelism and service are integral to the nature of the Church, and that the Church must both evangelise and serve, evangelism and service are not necessarily a part of every Christian activity. If one looks at the *total* work of the Church in all its aspects, in worship, as it is expressed in the life of congregations and individuals, in councils and federations, in its institutions and agencies, in lay movements, in social action, and in the manifold other ways in which the Church is related to the world, its total influence must be measured in terms of evangelism and service. Inattention to one or the other should be a matter of concern as one examines the whole

life of the Church. But evangelism and service need not be part of every activity, and they should not be confused.

There are practical reasons why this is so. For one thing, there is widespread suspicion among non-Christians that Christian service is offered as the entering wedge for efforts to win converts, and that the ulterior purpose of service is proselytism. While it is true that the Christian should witness to His salvation and want all men to share in his experience of Jesus Christ, it should be clear in his own mind and made clear to others that the service he renders is offered freely, and that he neither extends nor withholds it on condition that it result in conversions.

Further, evangelism and service should not be confused lest it create expectations which are unlikely to be fulfilled, resulting in disappointment and disillusion for those who serve. Service and evangelism are not the same thing; each has its own purpose. Service expresses compassion which arises out of the depth of Christian experience; it seeks the good of others because the server himself has received unmerited grace and goodness from the hand of God. Evangelism attempts to awaken men to their need for redemption and to win them to personal allegiance to Jesus Christ as their Savior. Service ameliorates human suffering, improves human welfare, creates greater mutuality. Evangelism works for the creation of a community of disciples bound together in common commitment to Jesus Christ in the fellowship of the Church. Disillusion and discouragement arise when those engaged in social service expect that their efforts will produce the fruits of evangelism. This perhaps is a fallacy in the hope expressed by some at Jerusalem and later that rural reconstruction efforts would "Christianize human life" and build "a truly Christian rural civilization" which would be "Christian to the core". One would not discount the importance of the influence of Christian service on life and civilization, but one hesitates to count heavily on it to make them in any profound sense Christian. Every act of service has saving significance, but evangelism wins men to personal allegiance to Jesus Christ. Through evangelism lives are radically changed, the Church established, the destiny of men and the character of civilizations and the course of history altered.

In the third place, the Church should be clear about the distinct purposes of service for its own spiritual well-being. Unless the Church seeks constantly to be the Servant of the world, it easily becomes preoccupied with its own welfare. This is true of the Church everywhere, but particularly true of the Church in India where many members of the Christian community, a minority in a vast sea of Hinduism, tend to measure every activity of the Church in terms of their own advantage. The tendency of the Church everywhere to be self-centred and in-grown

must be resisted for the very health of the Church itself. Service which has no ulterior purpose helps the Church and individual Christians find their life by losing it.

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For Use of Christian Students

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE FOR
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19, MILLER ROAD, BANGALORE
1961

must be resisted for the very health of the Church itself. Service which

This list of books on Hindusim has been compiled to help guide the reading of young missionaries and theological students in India. The list is by no means complete, but an attempt has been made to select from available literature on the subject volumes that may be regarded as generally acceptable and easily secured.

In making this compilation we have been helped by the advice of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan of the University of Madras, Dr. S. J. Samartha of the United Theological College, Bangalore, Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, and Prof. M. Yamunacharya, formerly of Mysore University.

P. D. DEVANANDAN,
Director, CISRS.

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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE MYSORE STATE

[*Under the joint auspices of the Bangalore Christian Council, the Karnataka Christian Council and the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, a Study Consultation was held at the United Theological College, Bangalore, from December* 20 *to* 23, 1960. *The purpose of the Consultation was*: "*to survey the political, economic, social and educational problems facing the Christian Community in the State of Mysore*; *to define the main issues*; *and to suggest a Christian approach to them in the light of the Christian understanding of State and Society*." *About* 30 *people participated. The four reports presented here express the consensus of opinion of the Study Consultation.*]

1. The Social Conditions and Problems

The Composition of the Community

1. *Origins.*—The Mysore Diocese of the C.S.I. reports that about half of its community has been Christian for three generations or longer, a third are of the second generation, and the remainder were baptized as adults or in new Christian groups. Most of the Christians are Kannada-speaking people, although there are pockets of English-speaking people, Tamils (especially in Bangalore and the Kolar Gold Fields) and Telugus (near the Andhra Pradesh border and in industrial areas). Most were originally drawn from rural areas, where the majority came from Harijan stock and were illiterate. It might be added that a substantial number are descendants of famine orphans.

2. *Present Structure.*—Many of the people from rural places on being educated migrated to cities and towns where they found employment at first in Mission service but later mainly in Government services, thus forming an urban middle class. The second group consists mainly of less educated people who migrated to town areas, many of them relatively recently, to form a part of the urban labouring community. Many of these people speak Tamil and Telugu. The third group remains in the villages, where they are still engaged in agricultural pursuits. The educated young people from these villages migrate to the towns to join the first group and some of the less-educated of

vigorous young people (especially men) leave to join the second group, especially in times of famine.

Family and Social Problems

Some problems such as improvident expenditure, drinking and gambling are widespread in all three social classes. Others are more characteristic of one or two of these groups.

1. *Urban Middle Class.*—These people being subject to frequent transfer often do not put down deep roots into the local community and do not make living contacts with the Hindu people in the midst of whom they live. Very often also they do not make real contact with such Christian groups as there may be in the places to which they are transferred. Many others, of course, have more stable jobs, but they also tend to run into difficulties of various kinds. An attempt to live beyond their means and sometimes the pursuit of a life of material ease and security often leads to both husband and wife working. If one partner is transferred this leads to disruption of the family. In any case, it leads to neglect of parental responsibilities, poor Christian family life and failure in discipline. These together are perhaps responsible for poor academic performance on the part of many children and for their failure to preserve in jobs.

The position of the very considerable number of women medical workers in Government service, both in hospitals and as midwives, is especially difficult. They are subject to frequent transfer at short notice, and often have to go to lonely places where no proper accommodation is provided for them. They are thus exposed to acute dangers in many ways. It is not surprising that many fall into moral difficulties, especially as many seem to pass completely beyond the pastoral care of the Church and so have often no Christian fellowship. They have not received any kind of training to fit them to face up to this kind of situation; they are spiritually, morally and often physically unprepared. The same difficulties face teachers and other Government servants to somewhat lesser degrees. This is especially so in certain areas where immoral and corrupt practices are rampant in the communities where Christians are a small minority or quite by themselves.

2. *Urban Labouring Class.*—These people, while not subject to transfer at someone else's command, do likewise suffer from the effects of uprootment from their social setting though they will usually be able to make social contacts with Christians in the colonies where they settle down. Nevertheless they also often fail to get in touch with the pastor or to join regularly in Christian worship. Because of their uprooting, their moral difficulties are often acute with all kinds of

irregularities. The Tamil and Telugu groups continue to use mainly their own languages and need separate pastoral care. Christians of the urban working class are also liable to run into political difficulties in Trade Union activities, where they are used by other people for their own ends.

(3) *Village Christians.*—The strengths and weaknesses of the old social system remain, but very often the most intelligent and vigorous young people—especially the young men—have migrated to towns and cities leaving only the old and the weak and sometimes the children in the village. These people are subject to the old caste attitudes to a considerable degree still, and even those who arose from the same Harijan groups and have now successfully attached themselves to the relatively casteless urban middle classes are slow to mix with them and may not consent to eat in their houses.

The position of children who have gone from these village groups into town and city boarding homes raises a special problem. Many of them do not succeed very well in their education, and it has been suggested that malnutrition during the years immediately after weaning has much to do with this. It is reported that most of the girls settle down after marriage. Such boys as do well go into urban jobs, chiefly Government service, and join themselves to the middle class community, and they very frequently do not thereafter help their parents financially or in any other way, even though those parents may have sacrificed much to send them to the Boarding Homes. Those who do not succeed academically find themselves unable to settle back in village life, and yet they are qualified neither for white-collar nor for skilled-technical jobs.

Cultural and Religious Problems

Certain practices and customs persist among Christians of all these three social groups. These include the consulting of horoscopes, omens, fortune-telling, the use of charms and the observance of auspicious times. Women are treated as ceremonially unclean during menstrual periods and after childbirth. Various marriage customs persist. The throwing of betel-nut and puffed rice into the graves of the dead is common. The use of *tilaka* among women is becoming more common. Certain of these customs are in conflict with faith in Christ, while others are matters of discussion. Other practices are perhaps more characteristic of each of the three social groups.

1. *Urban Middle Class.*—While these people have mainly left village customs behind, they tend to adopt the practices of the Hindu people who form the vast majority around them. This is true of some

of the customs mentioned above. But especially in their workplaces people tend to get involved in Hindu rites and *puja* and do not like to stand out and make themselves conspicuous. It is perhaps even more difficult for Government employees on national festivals when Hindu *puja* sometimes takes place in their name and presence.

There is no lack of patriotism amongst Christians, although we are sometimes a little backward in taking part in nation-building activities. But we are puzzled as to how we can adopt national culture without those aspects of Hindu practice which directly conflict with our faith.

2. *Urban Labouring Class.*—Such people are sometimes subject to the problem mentioned above of *puja* in their workplaces, but they are also sometimes tempted to revert to some of the practices of village worship, especially when deprived of Christian fellowship.

3. *Village Christians.*—Village Christians are continually tempted to fall back on their old practices and worship, particularly if some of their group remain unbaptised, and if there is no worker on the spot. It is also very hard for them to resist when the caste people of the village insist that the worship or sacrifice is necessary for the well-being of the village, and that as they themselves cannot do it, the Christians may do it for them.

Recommendations

(1) The problem of the Christian home and the discipline of children needs very urgent attention. Immediate steps should be taken to find means for improving Christian teaching in the home and to giving our children more self-discipline and a spirit of independence.

(2) All Christian pastors must make it an obligation of the first importance to inform the pastor in the place where such persons are going (if possible even before they go) of the transfer of Government servants and the movements of migratory labourers.

(3) Hostels for working women should be set up on a self-supporting basis in all the larger centres.

(4) The question of the inability of village children to study should be taken up by a competent medical body.

(5) A special committee including theologians and if possible a competent anthropologist should be set up to investigate the origins, meaning, and present beliefs concerning such customs as are matters of doubt and opinion amongst Christian people.

(6) Christian Hospitals and other Christian Training Institutions should take immediate steps to initiate training to students to go out into the world to pursue their professions in such a manner as to make a positive witness to Christ.

(7) The Christian Church should make a firm effort to enforce prohibition amongst its own people and discourage gambling and other social evils.

II. The Economic Condition

Introduction.—Two basic principles of our approach may be stated at the very outset.

1. Since the economic problem of the Christian community is bound up with that of the nation, it cannot be considered or solved in isolation. Any solution lies in a fuller participation of the Christian community in the economic development of the larger community.

2. We are concerned with the economic problem, not merely from the point of view of material welfare but the welfare of the whole human being and therefore our economic uplift programme has a message to proclaim.

In this Report, we shall indicate the economic condition of the rural and the urban Christians, consider the reasons for their backwardness and suggest certain lines of remedial action.

The Economic Backwardness of the Christian Community

Rural.—The Christian community in the Mysore State may be classified under three heads: (1) Agriculturalists, (2) Paid workers, (3) A small number of businessmen and industrialists.

A good majority of Christians of the Mysore State live in villages. Most of them are agricultural labourers, a few own lands and a few others cultivate land on lease. The agriculturalists are usually in a state of perpetual indebtedness and as such are under the clutches of money-lenders. The Consultation is shocked to note that the evil practice of pledging the labour of their children as interest on the loan, which they have taken, exists even now in certain sections of the rural Christian community.

The agricultural income is very low. The crops often fail due to lack of rain in certain parts of our State and a condition of famine prevails. The agriculturalists find no other way of profitable use of leisure during the slack season which may last for three or four months in a year. Thus the general picture of Christians in villages is gloomy. Hunger and poverty are their close companions.

There is a strong tendency among Christians in certain sections of our area to leave agriculture and migrate in search of jobs. This is partly because they take little effort to adopt improved methods of cultivation or increase their land-holdings. Some of them are not agriculturalists by tradition. They come from some other class or trade and later settled down in agriculture, as such they know little of the real art of cultivation. Education is often considered by rural Christians as a means to secure jobs and very few educated Christians enter agriculture.

In general, very few show interest in the field of cottage industry or business; partly because Christians are not prepared to take risks and also they lack the spirit of adventure and hard work. The desire to become rich overnight without hard and patient work ruins their attempts. Beginning industries in a small way and enlarging them slowly is not considered worth while by most of them.

Lack of initiative and leadership is another problem facing village Christians. Even if we provide them a few free looms or such other implements they are not prepared to work independently. They prefer to work for wages under a master and are satisfied with the income they get thereby. Marketing is one of the main problems for Christians in this sphere.

There is a general tendency among Christians to look upon the Church as an agency or place to give them aid; so there is a general expectation that the Church should organise industries, establish schools, hospitals, etc., in order to give employment to Christians and Christians alone.

Christians on the whole take little advantage of the available aid offered by the Government for agriculture and small-scale industries such as poultry, tanning, weaving, carpet-making, rope-making, bee-keeping, etc. Very few Christian people go in for training in small-scale industry.

Some Christians are hesitant to join co-operative societies because of the prevailing corruption and bad management as well as lack of integrity. It is however gratifying to note that in certain areas, a good number of co-operative societies like hosiery co-operative societies, tanner co-operative societies and broom-making co-operative societies have been working successfully under Christian initiative and leadership. We commend their example to others.

Christian homes in the villages are considerably better in appearance than non-Christian homes but the standard of living is low. Living beyond the means and spending money extravagantly are quite common.

On the whole, it is discouraging to note that the Christian community in the rural area is a dependent community without self-reliance.

They always look for support, aid, initiative and leadership from outside.

Urban.—The Christians living in bigger towns and cities are mostly drawn from the villages. They are found in offices and factories, a few in business. Teaching, nursing, clerical and such other jobs are usually preferred by them. Educated unemployment is a serious problem of urban Christians. Comparatively speaking, Christians in the urban area are better off than those in the rural area.

The disintegration of the joint-family system, or let us say the emphasis placed on individualism, creates a problem for the older people, especially the old parents left in the villages uncared.

There are quite a few litigations in the courts connected with the Church administration, though the number of court cases on other matters is negligible.

The dowry system is not so prevalent in our area.

There are only negligible number of beggars in the Christian community.

Some Reasons for our Backwardness

(1) Christians have no tradition of business, trade, and commerce.

(2) Since Christians are drawn from different communities, caste-backgrounds and strata of society, they lack solidarity of community life.

(3) Christians lack initiative and leadership.

(4) They are unwilling to take up different categories of trade or industry.

(5) They lack sense of or training in co-operation.

(6) Christians do not have capital to avail themselves of, even if they are prepared to enter a small industry or trade.

Remedies

(1) Christians should develop greater sense of co-operation among themselves and enter into co-operation with the larger community agencies for economic uplift.

(2) The clergy and members of the congregation should be educated with regard to national development plans and their consciousness should be aroused so that they make the best of the available opportunity they offer.

(3) Organise a united Trust and Endowment for awarding scholarships to Christian students, especially of the rural area for different technical courses related to engineering, medicine, technology, crafts, etc.

(4) Encourage Christians to enter the field of small-scale industries and help them develop initiative, enterprise and managing skill.

(5) After conversion to the Christian faith, people should as far as possible be encouraged to continue their own traditional occupations provided they are honourable. The need is to modernise it and make it more productive.

(6) In order to inculcate a sense of dignity of labour and the proper development of variety of talents and aptitudes, schools should include crafts, gardening, poultry, bee-keeping and such other creative activities in their usual programme.

(7) In order to get acquanited with the new opportunities made available by the Government for development, the Church should arrange for the circulation of some of the useful publications such as 'Panchayatraj', 'Yoyajan', etc., among the clergy.

(8) Disputes connected with Church management should be settled out of court, and litigation should be discouraged in all possible ways.

(9) The clergy, especially in the rural areas, should be trained and encouraged to organise co-operative societies and to initiate economic development projects for the benefit of both Christians and non-Christians as has already been done in some parts of our State.

III. Problems and Opportunities of Christian Schools

The Consultation identified the following problems of Christian Schools in the Mysore State:

(1) The problem of take-over of private schools by Government.

(2) The problem arising out of the secular nature of the Welfare State.

(3) The problem arising out of the larger enrolment of pupils in schools, particularly in respect of accommodation, equipment, the need for diversified courses of studies and the quality of education.

(4) The lack of an adequate number of Protestant Christian Teacher-Training Institutions in the Mysore State. (There is only one such Training School at present.)

(5) The lack of any Protestant Christian College in the Mysore State.

(6) The dependence of Christian schools on foreign aid for their recurring expenditure.

The problems were considered in the light of the opportunities available for Christian service in the field of education. In the light of the discussion, the following findings were recorded:

1. That the objectives of Christian schools under the present changed conditions shall continue to be: (i) to provide Christian education to Christian pupils, and (ii) to bring the non-Christian pupils under the influence of Christian ideals.

2. That in spite of many problems that we may have to face on account of the conditions created by the Welfare State, education still offers opportunity for Christian service and witness. Although the Welfare State cannot encourage or permit teaching of any particular faith in schools, Christian education in the sense of development of all the aspects of one's personality under the rule of God, *i.e.*, under His Love and Will, can be given in the Christian school, provided we have a group of devoted and earnest Christian teachers properly trained in the varied new techniques and methods of presentation of Christian ideals and Christian living in schools, adjusted to the changing situations. Since Christian service in the field of education is closely related to the Christian service in the spiritual field, and since educational ministry among the children and youth is considered an essential mission of the Church as implied in the three-fold commission of our Lord and since the educational need of our country at present is the most important whether from the point of view of the nation or of the Kingdom of God it is necessary not only that Christian schools should continue to serve but also that they should be strengthened in their efficiency and effectiveness.

3. That since a batch of devoted and earnest Christian teachers well trained in the modern technique of presentation of Christian ideals and Christian living in schools, is needed in order to enable the schools to maintain their effective Christian influence, it is quite necessary to arrange for short-term training courses in Christian education for all Christian teachers, primary and secondary, working in Christian and non-Christian schools, at a convenient place, preferably during the summer holidays.

4. That since the Basic Education Scheme, with some modifications, has been adopted as the pattern of national education with a view to replace the traditional, inert, and mechanical type of education by an active and creative type and since the Scheme is said to be so elastic as to conserve Christian values in education, it is felt necessary that Christian organisations and institutions should study the Basic Education Scheme in order to find out what important features of the Scheme can be profitably adopted in our programme of education both primary and secondary so that Christian schools can make a distinct contribution in the field of national education. The possibilities of starting Christian Basic Primary Teachers' Training Institutions should also be explored.

5. That since the traditional secondary education designed for only a small fraction of youthful society is not at all suitable in the changed conditions of the Welfare State where education for all youth is necessary, the Christian High Schools have to become comprehensive in purpose and programme by introducing some diversified courses. Since 75% of the cost of conversion of High Schools into Higher Secondary Schools is borne by the Government and since the conversion is arranged to be effected gradually by stages in the course of four years, it will not be very difficult for most of the Christian High Schools to be upgraded into Higher Secondary Schools. Christian schools should try and see how best they can avail themselves of the various types of financial assistance that are being given by the Government of India and of the State for improvement of primary and secondary education. All Christian schools should endeavour to find local public support as early as possible; and it is desirable that whatever foreign aid that they may get, should be increasingly used for non-recurring items of expenditure rather than on recurring items.

6. The Consultation welcomes the assurances given by the Minister for Education, Mysore State, that the Government will not take over private schools either primary or secondary.

7. Considering that the present trend of State control of all education is likely to be a growing trend, the Church, even as it continues to serve through Christian schools, should explore alternate ways of imparting Christian education and also alternate areas of Christian service. The following alternate ways of imparting Christian education are suggested:

(i) Strengthening and expansion of Sunday Schools.

(ii) Organisation of Students' Camps and Retreats.

(iii) Organisation of Vacation Bible Schools.

(iv) Organisation of Bible Study Groups for youths for which a suitable syllabus should be prepared.

The following alternate areas of Christian social service are also suggested:

(i) Organisation of Hostels for Christian and non-Christian pupils as well as Hostels meant purely for Christians. Possibility of locating such Hostels in rural areas may be explored.

(ii) Organisation of schools for training youths in technical and industrial skills required for modern industries.

(iii) Organisation of Hostels for youths working in industrial centres.

(iv) Organisation of Christian reading rooms and circulating library for dissemination of useful information in all important areas of knowledge in addition to that of religion.

(v) Organisation of Youth Welfare Centres where youths can be trained in leadership.

(vi) Organisation for the production of suitable literature for children and adults.

(vii) Organisation of Nursery Schools wherever necessary particularly in industrial centres.

(viii) Creation of a Trust for the award of scholarships to the deserving poor Christian pupils is worth consideration. Some Indian Christians may also be encouraged to establish such scholarships.

(ix) Organisation of at least one Christian College in the Mysore State.

(x) Organisation of an adequate number of Christian Teacher-Training Institutions.

IV. Political Problems and Responsibilities

The political problems and conditions of the Protestant Christian community in the new State of Mysore differ widely from those of their counterparts in the rest of the Southern States. The reasons are not far to seek. The community is very small in number and including the Roman Catholics forms only 2·1% of the total population the Protestants being less than 0·7%. The members of the community are scattered over a wide area, and common rallying points of secular nature being absent, no sense of cohesion has been developed so far. Opportunities for corporate thinking and action have been non-existent.

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The majority are socially and economically backward though a good number have been considered literate. It is true that the members of the community are found to belong to various social strata, but the majority hail from communities which had been socially ostracized for centuries and in fact they carry the same disabilities and disadvantages even today.

Hence it is only natural that the community as a whole is yet to awake to a sense of awareness of their political rights and responsibilities in the democratic secular India. Christians everywhere in the country, and Mysore is no exception, have expressed in clear terms their loyalty and commitment to the great objectives of the nation. These are, among others, the Democratic Welfare State, the Socialistic Pattern of Society and the structures and experiments the nation has given to itself. The political problem facing the Christian community in Mysore is how it may make an effective contribution to these national objectives and in the process how to become a politically conscious and progressive community. This involves the community becoming fully alive to the opportunities and dangers inherent in the rapidly changing political situation in the country.

Opportunities for significant national service and self-advancement abound in plenty, but the community as a whole has yet to make use of them. The democratic experiments such as the Panchayat Raj and the Co-operative Movement, the wide land reforms, the working out of national plans in their various phases, the community projects, the national extension service, the growingly powerful civic and legislative bodies, and the democratic elections and choice that precede the filling up of such elective bodies provide a wide arena for service and self-expression. The inalienable right of every individual to exercise his vote in favour of the person of his choice is a hallmark of true democracy. Participation in the political life of the country by becoming active members and workers of democratic political parties in spite of their drawbacks is no longer a matter of choice or for indecision. But both in the exercise of franchise and in active participation in the political life of the State, the record of the Christian community in the State has been far from satisfactory. The paucity of political workers in the community either as popular representatives in the various elective bodies or in the political parties is quite a distressing factor. The few workers found in the political arena deserve a far greater sense of belonging than is given to them at present. However, the needs and urges of the community for fuller participation in the national life should not blind us to the dangerous political realities inherent in the situation. The tendency of communalism, sectionalism and local parochialism becoming decisive in matters of choice and decision (even in the setting

up of candidates) both at the Governmental and party levels in the State is a potential danger. This may ultimately result in the people losing faith in democracy itself. Fully conscious of their political responsibilities Christians must pledge to fight communalism in the State that militates against the democratic secular objectives of the nation. However, great care should be taken to see that the prevailing communalism should not be taken as an excuse by the community to withdraw into itself and thus develop its own brand of communalism or as a reason to wash its hands off the 'dirty game' of politics.

The present political situation of the Christian community leads to the definite conclusion that the Church and other responsible Christian bodies like the Karnatak Christian Council should undertake an intensive programme of political education of its members. For this purpose the setting up of a Political Commission by the Church of South India and other organized Churches in the area to advise the respective Churches on political rights and responsibilities has become a prime necessity. For the stupendous task of political education at parish and local levels, for effective political action and for fighting communalism in general, the emergence of a political organization of Christians has become inevitable. Such an organization will not work as a political party adding to the number of political parties in the country today. Its aim and scope will be restricted.

Recommendations

We venture to make the following recommendations regarding the development of the means of political education and participation:

(1) The Consultation is of the opinion that a Christian political organization be sponsored in the State for the following purposes:

(*a*) to educate Christians at the parish and diocesan levels in their political responsibilities to the nation and in the exercise of their franchise.

(*b*) to make pronouncements, after adequate study, on important political, economic and social issues from the Christian standpoint.

(*c*) to represent to the Government and other authorities the needs of the community.

(2) The CSI and other Church bodies in the State should be requested to organize Commissions on Public Affairs to advise them on the various questions facing the community.

(3) It is recommended that possibilities of co-operation between the Roman Catholics and Protestants on common political issues be explored.

(4) Christians should be encouraged to pursue their own political ideologies in democratic political parties. However, attempts should be made to get the Christians together for combined political efforts for the furtherance of the community's legitimate aspirations.

(5) The Consultation strongly feels that both the Government and the major communities and parties should be impressed with the fact that their own progress and advancement will depend also on the progress attained by a small minority as the Protestant Christians. To bring home this fact, contacts with non-Christians should be encouraged.

(6) Every attempt should be made to secure adequate representation on Village Panchayats for Christians who have come from socially ostracized communities. This is all the more necessary when they form a substantial majority of those to whom separate representation is provided.

(7) Christians should co-operate with the Government in all nation-building activities such as construction of approach roads, encouraging cottage industry, and promotion of co-operative movements, by rendering their own contribution in the form of voluntary service or otherwise.

(8) It was felt that Christians should guard against developing a permanent minority consciousness. They should as far as possible work with majority communities and also take up the causes of other minorities. In view of the fact that the Christian community will not be able to send up any substantial number of members to the legislature and other elective bodies, positive attempts should be made to cultivate the goodwill and friendship of non-Christian legislators and to appraise them of the community's special needs.

(9) It is felt that the classification of communities for purposes of educational aid and admission to technical institutions and services based on caste, percentage of literacy and existing representation on Government service is not satisfactory or adequate. The Government will have to be fully appraised of the fact that the classification recommended by the Naganagouda Committee will work great hardship and injustice to the Christian community in general and the Protestants in particular.

(10) Conscious of the fact that the political influence of the community will ultimately be in proportion to the the public service it renders, it is recommended not to close down our nation-building institutions as is now being done in certain quarters on the alleged ground that they have ceased to be of service to the Christian community.

(11) The Consultation feels that the few political workers belonging to the community are in their work isolated from the Church's life and mission; steps should be taken to foster the sense of belonging to them on the basis that politics too is a part of Christian witness.

(12) The Consultation felt the urgent need to sponsor the starting of institutes to train Christians as well as non-Christians on the working of the Panchayat system and the Co-operatives.

APPENDICES

Resolutions

At the closing session of the Consultation, the following resolutions were adopted:—

(1) *That Sri. M. M. Thomas of the CISRS be authorised to edit and publish the Findings in English in the "Religion and Society".*

(2) *That the Findings be sent to the authorities of the Churches in the Mysore State, the Karnataka Christian Council and the Bangalore Christian Council requesting them to take the steps necessary for the implementation of the recommendations in them.*

(3) *That a Committee consisting of Messrs. C. P. Paul, Benjamin Joseph, S. J. Samartha (Consultant) and the Rev. S. Ratnam (Convener) be appointed to get the Findings translated into Kannada; that steps be taken to get it printed in Kannada and distributed to the pastors of Churches in the Mysore State.*

(4) *That a Committee consisting of Messrs. C. S. Kirby, P. L. Samuel, K. J. Abraham and E. V. Mathew (Convener) with powers to co-opt more members be appointed to implement the report on the Political Problems.*

Rt. Rev. N. C. Sargent .. *Chairman*
Rev. S. J. Samartha .. *Convener*

(Organising Committee)

List of Participants

1. Rev. C. Arangaden, Harris Road, Benson Town, Bangalore-1.
2. Mr. K. J. Abraham, Binnypet, Bangalore-1.
3. Miss Stella Bailey, 2-D, Mission Road, Bangalore-2.

4. Mr. Robert S. Bangera, Basel Mission Girls' High School, Dharwar.
5. The Rev. J. R. Chandran, United Theological College, 17, Miller Road, Bangalore-1.
6. Dr. P. D. Devanandan, C.I.S.R.S., 19, Miller Road, Bangalore-1.
7. Justice C. S. Deodhar, Vijayanagar, Plot No. 15, Hubli.
8. The Rev. S. R. Furtado, Basel Mission Compound, Balmatta, Mangalore-1.
9. Mr. M. L. Benjamin Joseph, Boarding and Lodging at Vijaya Bhavan, Sunkalpet, Ulsoor Gate, Bangalore-2.
10. Mr. C. D. Jathanna, C.S.I., Summadi, Guledgudd P.O., Bijapur District.
11. Sister Gladys Kedward, 'Vishranti Nilayam,' 13, Cubbon Road, Bangalore-1.
12. Mr. C. S. Kirby, 'Spoortiniketan', Club Road, Hubli.
13. Mr. E. V. Mathew, 29, Lalbagh Road, Bangalore-2.
14. Mrs. G. Muliyil, 16, Miller Road, Bangalore-1.
15. Dr. Anjilvelil V. Mathews, Near Woodland Hotel, Bangalore-1.
16. Dr. K. E. Peter, 15-B, Church Street, Bangalore-1.
17. Mr. G. S. Paul, National Savings Officer, 32, St. John's Road, Cleveland Town, Bangalore-1.
18. Mr. Ponnaya, Bangalore.
19. Rev. E. C. Reddy, Methodist Mission Compound, Belgaum.
20. Rev. S. Ratnam, C.S.I., Dodballapur, Bangalore District.
21. The Rt. Rev. N. C. Sargant, Bishop in Mysore, 2, Mission Road, Bangalore-2.
22. Dr. S. J. Samartha, 16, Miller Road, Bangalore-1.
23. Mr. E. Surappa, Church of South India, Hospet, Bellary District.
24. Rev. R. G. Sleigh.
25. Mr. M. M. Thomas, Panavila Junction, Thycaud, Trivandrum.
26. Mrs. Grace Tucker, Deputy Minister for Education, Vidhana Soudha Secretariat, Bangalore-1.
27. Rev P. J. Thomas, Krista Mitra Ashram, Ankola, Mysore State.

REVIEW OF BOOKS

STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA'S VILLAGE

By Dr. A. P. Barnabas, *Allahabad**

Village studies are of recent origin, particularly from the point of view of organised field studies. Dr. Majumdar states as follows:

> We, in India particularly, suffer from a dearth of properly formulated hypotheses in social sciences. This is probably due to the absence of significant base-line research.[1]

He further states:

> It is increasingly felt by anthropologists and sociologists that exploratory research has to be the first step in the formulation of problems for more precise investigations and for the further development of relevant hypotheses which are likely to lead to definite and specific establishment of priorities to take steps toward social amelioration.[2]

This statement was made at the end of 1955 at a conference of sociologists and anthropologists. In his address at the beginning of 1958, at the Third Conference of Sociology, Dr. Dube, one of the sectional presidents, made the following remark:

> Our studies are often modelled on similar studies done elsewhere in the world and lack a coherent frame of reference relevant to the structure and organization of Indian society. While our descriptive categories are satisfactory our analytical categories leave much to be desired. On the whole, the organization of such research on an India-wide basis lacks planning and we have not evinced enough interest in evolving or rightly defining the criteria on which we select villages for community study.... We can explain our position by suggesting that initial efforts

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* Dr. A. P. Barnabas is on the staff of the Department of Rural Sociology of the Allahabad Agricultural Institute. His doctorate thesis *Social Change in a North Indian Village* (reviewed elsewhere) was based on his study of the village of Sarangpur (5 miles from the Institute).

[1] D. N. Majumdar, *Society in India* (edited by A. Aiyappan and Bala Ratnam), Madras, Social Science Association, 1956, p. 146.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

in any new direction are necessarily exploratory in nature or by emphasizing that our need for facts is so great that any type of study should be welcome.[3]

The literature reviewed consists of those studies which describe villages and the process of change based on the field studies in India.

BEHIND MUD WALLS by *C. V. and W. H. Wiser*.—This is a description of the village Karimpur, in North India. The material presented in the book was first used for a Ph.D. thesis at Cornell University. The purpose of the study was "to make a survey of the social, religious, economic and family life of a typical North India Village".[4]

Wiser explains how he was accepted in the village as a friend after initial reverses. He then describes the various phases of the life of the village. "The Brahmins are absolute."[5] The village leaders seldom display their power, but they are secure in the knowledge that when necessary they could use it. Wiser refers to the "absoluteness of the power of leaders who combine in themselves the rights of high birth and economic power".[6] He describes the followers as those content to go their own obstrusive way. There is an attitude of resignation among the lower castes which makes the village leaders sure of the loyalty of those who follow. Wiser also shows how the upper castes tended to stifle any attempt by the lower castes to get an education by withdrawing all their children when the children of the sweeper class joined the school. Further description of the life of the village, of the family, of the younger generation, and of the "agents of authority" are given. The last part of the book is probably the most useful, for it is here that Wiser records the conversations of the villagers which explain their behaviour and attitudes. "In the interests of our own safety, we are prepared to treat all as self-seekers."[7] "In fostering the development of a new order, whatever form it may take, we cannot cast off the old as useless."[8]

The new order the villagers look forward to is indicated by the villagers. They realize that changes are necessary but they want to be sure that the old, which has given them stability, will not be des-

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[3] S. C. Dube, Presidential Address, Third Indian Sociology Conference, 1958, pp. 5–6.

[4] C. V. and W. H. Wiser, *Behind Mud Walls*, New York, Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1937.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

troyed by the new. Unless this stability can be preserved in the new order, they would rather keep to the old even if they are characterized as not progressive.

INDIAN VILLAGE by *S. C. Dube* was the next book based on field study to appear after *Behind Mud Walls*. "What we need today is a series of studies of village communities from different parts of the country covering the many divergent patterns of organizations and ethos."[9] The study of a village in the State of Hyderabad is described in this book. The purpose, in the words of the author, is "to give a clear and intimate picture of some aspects of life in one Indian village".[10] It is a descriptive study. The headings under which the description is made are: (1) Social Structure: caste system, inter-caste, intra-caste, as well as inter-village and intra-village relations; (2) Economic Structure: the occupation of the various castes, agriculture, cattle, non-agricultural occupations, are discussed; (3) Ritual Structure: religious beliefs, festivals, rituals of life-cycle, beliefs about after-death are the concerns in this chapter; (4) In "The Web of Family Ties," the family structure and inter-personal relations in the family are discussed; (5) Levels of Living: status differentiation based on religion and caste, and onwership, wealth, position in government service and village organization, age, and personality traits are discussed; (6) In the chapter entitled "Living Together", the facts dealt with are intra-personal relations, attitudes to caste, age, urban *vs.* rural.

The last chapter is entitled "The Changing Scene". The discussion here centres around the changes that are taking place. Among the various factors that were bringing about change were urban contacts, education, administrative reforms, government-sponsored welfare activities, activities of political parties, and democratic elections. The changes occurring in the family system are growth of individualism, more frequent migration, and diminishing regard for traditional principles. The caste, too, is no longer as rigid a structure as before. The very basis of the village council has been changed with the introduction of democratic elections. The abolition of the feudal system has been a big step in the direction of land reform.

Many material changes including Western medicine have been accepted. On the basis of the changes, the author makes the prediction "that given suitable conditions, the tempo of change would greatly increase".[11]

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[9] S. C. Dube, *Indian Village*, Cornell University Press, 1955.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

VILLAGE INDIA—Studies in the Little Community[12] by *M. Marriott* is probably one of the most important books published in recent years on village India. The book is not concerned with change directly. "Indeed, the primary interest that brought about the volume is not the effort to understand India and her changes. It is the effort to understand how to seek understanding of any great civilization and its enormously complex changes through anthropological studies of villages."[13] One of the major foci of the book is to answer the question: "To what extent can India's village communities be considered legitimate isolates for social science study and analysis?"

The question is answered by eight different people, based on their field studies. From these articles it will be clear that there can be no "yes" or "no" answer to the question. Even earlier, Opler had pointed out the extensions of an Indian village: the village is both an isolate and also a non-isolate. In the matter of services, the village is self-sufficient, but there are other factors, *e.g.*, marriage and occupations, for which the villagers have to go beyond the village.

The villages studied were spread over different parts of the country. "The book conveys a general impression of great variety within a prevailing similarity."[14] The eight studies discussed are not similar and all of them do not answer the questions raised directly. In one instance the village is seen almost as an isolate. In another village, radical social changes are shown to indicate that the village ceases to be a significant unit of investigation. One study is concerned with one caste in the village indicating that it is possible to study a sub-section of a village. The nearness of a city and its effect on the village is described in another study. One study discusses the formation of personality within a social structure. Two articles are concerned with comparisons, one between a tribal group and a village group and the other between a village of Mexico and a village of India.

The book is an attempt to answer the question, "How relevant are holistic methods of analysis for studies of villages in India?" In studying the organizing processes, social relations, leadership, political institutions and social changes, the articles clearly indicate that there are both internal and external forces. To understand the villages, both these forces need to be studied.

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[12] M. Marriott, ed., *Village India*, University of Chicago Press, 1955.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

[15] O. Lewis, *Village Life in North India*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958.

VILLAGE LIFE IN NORTH INDIA by *O. Lewis*[15] is a study of a village near Delhi undertaken at the request of the Programme Evaluation Organization of Community Department while he was a consultant to the Ford Foundation. He was helped by six Indian students in his field-work. As the study was undertaken at the request of the Community Development Programme, the major purpose of the research was to be able to use the findings as guide for an action programme. Lewis himself lists the objectives as follows: (1) To demonstrate the relevancy of the intimate understanding of village life and organization for the work of community development workers; (2) to obtain significant base-line data in a village within a community project area prior to the start of an action programme so that the impact of the action may be studied; (3) to develop some research papers which would reflect modern field work techniques in cultural anthropology and sociology.[16]

The study is exploratory in nature. Lewis describes the social system of the village under headings: Caste and Jajmani System, A Study of Factions, Marriage Cycle, Festival Cycle, Concepts of Religion and Ethics. Lewis indicates that there are extensions of the village for various purposes, *e.g.*, marriage and marketing, thereby showing that the village is not a self-sufficient cohesive community. However, the major contribution of the book to the understanding of the social structure is the introduction of the concept of factions. Carl Taylor says, "Lewis' greatest contribution to an understanding of the social structure or system of human relationships within which the residents of Rampur village live and work, is the clear delineation of two dimensions of social structure, other than the village as a whole—'factions' which have been a smaller-than-caste social dimension....."[17]

"Factions are small cohesive groups within castes which are the focus of power and decision-making and contribute to the compartmentalisation and segmented nature of the village organization."[18] When factions act as cohesive units, are self-sufficient as a ceremonial group, and are economically sufficient, then they could be said to be successful. He further characterizes them as kinship groupings.

From the view-point of change, factions are important because they are decision-making and leadership-generating groups. According to Lewis they provide: (1) ready-made communication channels for community development workers; (2) ready-made co-operative groups;

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[16] O. Lewis, *Village Life in North India*, p. vii.

[17] Carl Taylor, "Book Review Section", *Rural Sociology*, 24 (1), March 1959, p. 64.

[18] O. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

(3) much closer representation of the people than is otherwise possible. Factions, according to Lewis, are "positive aspects for community development."[19] However, how effective an "agent of change" factions can be, is a matter of speculation.

A further contribution is an attempt at a comparative analysis of the village of Rampur and that of a Mexican village, Tepoztlan, of which Lewis had made a study earlier. The two purposes he had in making the comparison were: (1) "to contribute toward our general understanding of peasantry"[20] and (2) "to illustrate the wide range of cultural forms possible under the rubric of peasant society, and thereby indicate the typology of peasantry."[21] He proceeds then to make comparisons on the basis of settlement pattern, land and economy and social organisation. He indicates that while some similarity exists in the level of technology and economy, the difference in social organization, value systems, and personality are very great. No particular implications have been indicated.

INDIA'S CHANGING VILLAGES by *S. C. Dube*[22] reports research which was undertaken in two villages in North India for the purpose of evaluating a programme in action. "The aim of this study was to examine some of the important human factors involved in externally induced and State-directed programmes of economic development and culture change in a technologically underdeveloped society." Very little of the social structure is described. The Community Development Programme is described in great detail. From the view-point of change, the chapters, "Response to Change", and "Cultural Factors in Change," are important.

Dube says that "nearly seventy per cent. of the development programme benefits went to the 'elite' group."[23] The motivations which led people to accept the changes were: (1) economic advantage and convenience; (2) prestige of the individual family, kin-group, caste, and village; (3) novelty of innovations; (4) compliance to the wishes of the government and village "leaders". The obstacles were: (1) apathy of the people; (2) suspicion and distrust; (3) lack of effective and adequate media of communication; (4) traditional and cultural factors.

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[19] O. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[22] S. C. Dube, *India's Changing Villages*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1958.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Dube points out that the importance of cultural factors in community development needs to be recognized. In an Indian village, he suggests that any agency which wishes to bring about change should take into consideration: (1) habits and taste, (2) social practices and tradition, (3) beliefs regarding various aspects of life, (4) social structure, (5) attitudes and values. He further says, "The vital cultural linkages existing between different aspects of life in different communities almost immediately carry the effects of innovation to other than the one in which the change was introduced."[24]

Apart from the books, there have been a number of articles written in recent years based on field studies. However, only two have been reviewed here as directly related to the problem of change.

SOCIAL CHANGE IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE[25] is a study of the village Paril, in U.P., North India. The summary by the authors is comprehensive and gives a good idea of the changes and hence is being quoted *in toto*.

> From contrasting Paril society of thirty years ago with that of the present, it is apparent that the alterations induced in social structure during the intervening period have indeed produced a variety of effects, structural and otherwise. Detailed analysis of process suggests a number of ways in which parts of this social structure have influenced other parts and ways in which changes in parts of this structure have effected other social behaviour. (*a*) Dissensions and competition in ranking are increased by broader distribution of power by a fluid and complex pattern of solidary relationships and by a widening of group relations outside the village. (*b*) Loss of distinctive kin-group culture is hastened by competition for rank. (*c*) Legal conflict and the formation of factions increase with alteration or local failure of caste councils, and with integration of local political structures into wider grouping of powers. (*d*) Caste councils pass away when they are disrupted by reorganization of power and by competition for rank within themselves. (*e*) The new village association's effectiveness is hampered by the complexity of social structure and by the shift of power and competition for higher rank.[26]

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[24] S. C. Dube, *India's Changing Villages*, p. 144.

[25] M. Marriott, "Social Change in an Indian Village," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 1 (2), June 1952, pp. 145–55.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

There is not enough similar material in this study to either agree or disagree with these conclusions. They are presented to indicate the type of change that are being studied.

Economic, Political and Social Change in a Village in North-Central India is another article which deals directly with the topic of change.[27] Dube, Marriott, Opler and Singh, all of whom deal with changes in India, make the point that the general belief that the village is stagnant or static is rather naive. The present article under review studies almost every detail of the village and indicates that changes are taking place in population trends, mobility, modes of transportation, agricultural tools, farming methods, diet, stimulants (more tea is being consumed), processing of food, domestic animals, houses, household equipment, utensils, shopping habits, dress, communication, recreation, education, land ownership and use, wages and work conditions, family relations, group relations, social mobility, and politics. It seems clear that the stimuli to change have operated on different levels—local, national, and even international.[28] The most useful from the point of view of study is the remark: "It is our impression that the most extensive and pervasive shifts have occurred in outlook and political and social relations rather than in the realm of technology, material possessions, and work habits." The few metal ploughs, mechanical chaff cutters, improved sickles, and bicycles which have appeared in the village, while important, are perhaps more significant as tokens of things to come than as immediate practical assets. But the mass education of "untouchable" children, the introduction of co-education, the tolerance of widow remarriage, the wresting of political power from the land-owners and high caste groups by the artisans and lower castes are momentous changes that penetrate to the core of village life and indeed to that of Indian life. They bespeak of the end of an era and a reorganization of intellectual and social energy."[29]

Social change in the village may be stated as a fact. Though to the outside world the village seems stable and little altered, when one studies the village, tremendous upheavals become perceptible. Observations of Opler and Singh are important because they contradict the generally held idea that material change preceeds non-material change. In Indian villages the non-material seems to precede the material, validating the idea of Opler and Singh.

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[27] M. E. Opler and R. D. Singh, "Economical, Political, and Social Change in a Village in North-Central India," *Human Organisation*, 2 (2), Summer, 1952, pp. 5-12.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Two other books that may be included are SOCIAL CHANGE IN MALABAR[30] and TWICE BORN.[31] The first is not study of a specific village but is a study of change in an area. The book *Twice Born* deals with personality formation among the upper castes. The method used is depth analysis. Two more articles may be mentioned: *Technological Change in Overdeveloped Rural Areas* by Mackim Mariott and *Cultural Values in India's Economic Development* by M. Singer.

Two other publications, RURAL PROFILES[32] and SOCIETY IN INDIA,[32] are collections of articles of aspects of village study. However, the subjects dealt with are very varied and there is no connecting link. Here it is not possible to deal with them unless each article is discussed separately.

The studies discussed dealt with changes and have indicated the aspects that are changing and the agents of change.

Appendix :

SOCIAL CHANGE IN A NORTH INDIAN VILLAGE.[33] By *A. P. Barnabas.*

The picture one often conjures up of an Indian village is that of a society that is custom-bound and static. This view is based more on a subjective impression rather than on an objective analysis. The Government is trying to introduce long range changes in rural areas. But for a successful implementation of a programme of change, an understanding of the processes that are already in motion in a society is essential. It was with this aim that a study of the village of Sarangapur (about 5 miles away from the Institute) was undertaken by Dr. A. P. Barnabas of our Department of Rural Sociology.

The result of the study was very revealing. It indicated that rural societies are very dynamic and changes have occurred in many aspects of the life of the villages. In the village that was studied the aspects that were changing were family life, inter-caste relations, occupational patterns, physical mobility, material aspects (such as agricultural practices, furniture, food habits, clothing patterns, footwear), means and extent of social control, attitudes regarding education, education of girls, age of marriage, religion, outlook on life, etc.

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[30] M. S. A. Rao, *Social Change in Malabar*, Bombay, India, Popular Book Depot, 1957.

[31] M. Carstairs, *Twice Born*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1958. Already reviewed in *Religion and Society*, Vol. V, No. 3.

[32] D. N. Majumdar, ed., *Rural Profiles*, Lucknow, India, Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, 1955.

[33] A. Aiyappan and K. Balaratnam, eds., *Society in India*, Madras, India Book Centre (Social Science Association Publication), 1956.

[33] Not yet published.

The largest number of changes, both material and attitudinal, were among the Brahmins (the highest caste) and the lowest among the untouchables. Little difference in the percentage of people making changes was found between the younger and the older generations. Only in the case of personal habits was the rate of change greater among the younger generation.

The following interesting conclusions were drawn from the study: (1) The higher the caste, the greater the number of changes. (2) The higher the income, the greater the number of changes. (3) The higher the status of a person's occupation, the greater the number of changes. (4) The higher the education, the greater the number of changes. (5) The larger the land holding, the greater the number of new agricultural practices adopted. (6) Except in the case of personal habits, the rate of change was not greater among the younger generation.

While it may be difficult to predict the exact direction of social change that will take place in India in the next few years, the following broad generalisations can be drawn from the limited studies that exist. The changes will be greater among the higher socio-economic groups because they have the ability by way of resources to accept new things. Moreover they are less inhibited than the lower groups which are more afraid of restrictions and ridicule. Thus the gap in this matter between the upper and the lower castes is likely to increase.

Changes are taking place both in the material and non-material aspects and will continue to do so. The acceptance of new ideas and things has brought about the conflict with the existing beliefs and customs. This conflict is likely to intensify in the future.

The new patterns of occupations and increased communications are breaking down the primary group relations in the rural areas. The social interaction between different caste groups is on the increase and it seems that the rules of commensality are likely to become less and less rigid.

The most important change is that the rural people are beginning to feel that they can accomplish things for themselves. This attitude is continually gaining ground and will set in motion a series of changes which will make explicit the dynamism of the rural societies.

Part of the great work that lies ahead for the governmental and voluntary agencies is to set loose the latent dynamism that is inherent in our rural societies. Recent experiences in India have shown that attempts for changes from above bear little fruit and they do not create

initiative and enthusiasm in people so much needed for any abiding social change.

Voluntary agencies like the Institute can stimulate thought, study and action on the vital issues related to social change. A great deal of fundamental thinking has yet to be done in this whole field.

—MATHAI ZACHARIAH IN *Allahabad News*, Dec. 1960.

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